

FAILED STATES: DEFINING WHAT A FAILED STATES IS AND WHY NOT ALL FAILED STATES AFFECT
UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY

by
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Abstract:

Failed States have been discussed for over the past twenty years since the terrorist attacks of the United States on September 11th, 2001. The American public became even more familiar with the term “failed states” during the Arab Spring movement when several countries in the Middle East and North Africa underwent regime changes. The result of these regime changes was a more violent group of terrorists, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This thesis will address how to define failed states to ensure there is an understood baseline when looking to determine if a state could possibly fail. Further, this thesis will examine the on-going debate addressing the question of those who claim failed states can’t be predicted and determine if analytic modeling can be applied to the identification of failed states. The thesis also examines the need to identify “failed states” before they fail and will also discuss the effects certain failed states have directly on United States national security. Given this, the last portion of this paper and argument to be addressed will determine if there are certain failing states that the United States will not provide assistance to, as it is not in the best interest of our national security and that of our allies.

Saudi Arabia and Venezuela will be studied throughout the thesis. One is close to failing, if it has not already failed (Venezuela) while another is far from being a failed state (Saudi Arabia). Venezuela is failing, but this failure has had little to no impact on the United States from a national security perspective. However, Saudi Arabia given their importance as a Middle Eastern ally, would never be allowed to fail given the potential security and economic consequences if that were to happen.

Acknowledgments:

This paper would never be possible if it wasn't for the best parents someone could ask for, they believed this was possible long before I ever could. Thank you to my amazing wife and son who sacrificed their time to allow me to pursue this idea.

Dedication:

To my children, this paper is to show you that a lot of people may tell you that you can't do something, but if you work really hard and believe in what you are doing, amazing things can happen.

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Chapter 1 Introduction:

The term “failed state” came to the forefront of the United States security posture after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. While we have heard this term mentioned numerous times since then and about various countries that have failed, this thesis aims to show that although failed states are hard to identify and predict, not all failed states have affected United States National Security, and only select countries can fail that would directly affect our National Security in the future.

During the past two decades and specifically during the Arab Spring movement, the world saw the fall of several Middle Eastern dictators like Egypt, Libya and Yemen ¹. What spawned after this movement was rarely seen, but critical to what happened next in the landscape of our national security. Not only did nations fall, but groups there were once oppressed began to come to the forefront of the world stage. While some leaders fell, others had strong internal uprisings that cause them to flee their nation. Few nations were more affected by this than Syria who saw almost 150,000 people flee that country in just one year ². While some may have thought toppling, corrupt leaders would lead to a new wave of leadership, what happened after was the opposite. The nations became even more fragmented. Libya and Egypt are now worse off than they were before, and Syria has been involved in one of the most violent civil wars in history. The effect of these civil conflicts did not stay inside their nation’s borders. Instead what

¹ Koser, Khalid. 2012 Migration, Displacement and the Arab Spring Lessons Learned. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/migration-displacement-and-the-arab-spring-lessons-to-learn/>

² Koser, Khalid. 2012 Migration, Displacement and the Arab Spring Lessons Learned.

occurred was a formation of rebel groups from disparate lands across the Middle East. One of these rebel groups that benefitted from the Arab Spring unrest was ISIS.

A lot of the roots of ISIS could be drawn back to Iraq in the middle of the 2000s but it was after the unrest in Syria, Libya and Yemen that ISIS began to really mature. The original idea of the Arab Spring was to usher in a new wave of thinking and giving power back to the masses. As is often the case however, leadership structures don't mature overnight and with so many fractions of different ideologies trying to gain power, what was the original idea of the Arab Spring never really came to fruition. What resulted was even more frustration and this is how ISIS began their spread of power, specifically in Syria and Tunisia.

Although the power that ISIS has is a fraction of what it used to be, and now is made of up of a just a few small group of terrorists across the Middle East, ISIS for several years did have effects that directly tied to terrorist activities in the United States. Seven lethal attacks spread across four years led to a total of 82 deaths here in the United States. The attacks ranged from shootings to stabbings to even the beheading of one individual. ISIS also was responsible for direct attacks against our allies on foreign soil, most notably the Brussels train station attacks and the shootings in Paris, France³.

The rise of ISIS was just one of the many national security issues to arise from the failure of Middle East states in 2012. There were several other impacts to include the death of the US Ambassador in Libya and the still on-going civil war in Syria. Given how long the effects of these failed Middle Eastern states have had on the world security stage, this thesis will first examine

³ Haltiwanger, John ISIS In America How Many Times Has Islamic State Attacked America? December 11th, 2017. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/islamic-state-america-attacks-744497>

how we define what a failed state is from historical researchers and use what research has been done to examine the likelihood for failure of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. This thesis will then transition into understanding what more modern analytic approaches could be used vice historical analysis as was examined in the first paper of the portfolio. The approach is to determine if analytic methods can actually help to forecast when and if a state is about to fail. Lastly, the research will examine when it is important for the United Nations, or the United States to intervene if a state is about to fail and why the United States would or would not intervene given the national security implications a particular failed state may have.

Literature Review:

The use of the term “failed state” varies greatly. Rotberg defines a failed state in his terms as “Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens.”⁴ But other scholars who have attempted to define what a failed state is, do offer some context and why we should be careful when trying to articulate what a failed state is and if it can be defined to favor a particular thought process. One of these scholars, Thomas Grant, offers up this assessment. “First, the definition of ‘failed state’ could be manipulated to justify intervention where the real object was not self-defense, but bold imperial gain. Second, intervention, if unfettered by consensus as to the proper scope of the practice, could disrupt international order, as regional and global powers apply

⁴ Rotberg, Robert. 2004. “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators.” Foreign Affairs

inconsistent standards in deciding where and when intervention is appropriate.”⁵ Both Rotberg and Grant offer up their definition of failed states and have a more contemporary mind set when it comes to defining failed states with both being done in 2004. There is, however, literature that goes back to the early 1900s that also examines failed states. Perhaps one of the earliest definitions of failed states could be Max Weber’s definition. Weber states that “Today the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one. In the past, the most varied institutions have known the use of physical force as quite normal. Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Note that 'territory' is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence. Hence, 'politics' for us means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state.”⁶ This definition does help to better define what a failed state would be like in the modern world.

Additional researchers have also tried to pinpoint not just a definition of failed states, but also factors that could lead to a state failing. Cullen Hendrix is another scholar who has looked at the failed state problem and has helped to identify failed state factors. Hendrix hypothesizes that the factors needed to be examined are broken down into multiple areas. The areas are military capacity, bureaucratic administrative capacity, and the quality and coherence

⁵ Grant, Thomas. 2004. “Partition of Failed States: Impediments and Impulses”. *Indiana Journal of Global Studies*.

⁶ Weber, Max. *Politics As A Vocation*. Unknown

of political institutions.⁷ This research also does critical assessments that focus on the accuracy of what these measures capture. The only potential downfall of this study is that military capacity is not viewed as important as the other two factors.

One scholar that does take into account three important factors is the work done by Charles Call and his work to not necessarily define failed states, but to identify “gaps” and by identifying these “gaps” to not bin failed states as a one size fits all. The gaps that Call identifies are capacity gaps; this is where institutions are incapable of delivering minimal public goods and services to the population, security gaps which show which states fail to provide the proper level of security to keep its citizens safe, and lastly a legitimacy gap which describes how a significant portion of a country’s political elites and society disregard the basic rules that regulate how power is used and how wealth is distributed.⁸

Lastly, there are some scholars that believe not failed states are created equal and that every failed state has different rational for why the state failed. As will be displayed in the third chapter of this paper, we will look at the failed state index and how it can be used to potentially predict failed states. Beehner and Young believe that the failed state index is not a way to predict failed states because the fluidity of states presents too many variables; and as a result the Failed State Index model is flawed.⁹ Additionally, they believe that there is an inherent Western bias in the Failed State Index model and thus another reason that not only is the model not valid but why you cannot really call any state a failure.

7 Hendrix, C. (2010). Measuring state capacity: Theoretical and empirical implications for the study of civil conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(3), 273-285. Retrieved April 24, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/20752162

8 Call, C. T. (2011). Beyond the ‘failed state’: Toward conceptual alternatives. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(2), 303–326. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109353137>

9 Beehner and Young (2012) The Failure of the Failed State Index. *World Policy*. <http://worldpolicy.org/2012/07/17/the-failure-of-the-failed-states-index/>

Part of this thesis will be to first examine if we are properly defining failed states now, and if it's not, what do we need to do to recognize when a state is about to fail and if we can intervene beforehand.

Some believe identifying a country as "failed state" is not correct since there was never a chance for that country to be completely and independently successful to begin with, and the nation has been plagued by continuous civil war like Somalia has over the past 20 years.¹⁰ Other countries, like Libya, were stable until a major event like the Arab Spring movement in 2011, led to the overthrow of a stable, albeit harsh, government.¹¹ Unfortunately, many of these states still suffer from insecurity, instability, and the threat of terrorism.¹² Some authors have discussed how important it is to have bordering countries serve as allies to prevent failed states. Take Afghanistan as an example. "Having buy-in at the sub-regional level will ensure that violence and conflict do not spill across borders, but the intervening force must be seen as a trusted third party, rather than a party to the conflict."¹³ The importance of having allies to prevent failed states will be paramount as to why Saudi Arabia will never be a failed state.

Although having allies may help to prevent a failed state, it is important to identify factors that could help prevent a state from "failing" to begin with. With that in mind, financial stability appears to play a role in determining if a state is a failed state. Per one of Rothberg's

¹⁰ Brooks, Rosa Ehrenreich. 2005. "Failed States or the state as Failure?" *University of Chicago Law Review* 72, 1159-1196.

¹¹ Magen, Amichai. 2013. *The Crisis of Governance in the Middle East: Implications for Democracy, Development & Security*. Herzilya, Israel: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, at http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_33980-1522-1-30.pdf?130404150738.

¹² Stohl, Rachel and Michael. 2008 P.56-60 "Failing the Failed: The Bush Administration and Failed States" *Harvard International Law Review*.

¹³ Stohl, Rachel and Michael. 2008 P.56-60 "Failing the Failed: The Bush Administration and Failed States"

original analysis behind failed states, “On the economic side, living standards deteriorate rapidly as elites deliver financial rewards only to favored families, clans, or small groups. Corruption flourishes as ruling cadres systematically skim the few resources available and stash their ill-gotten gains in hard-to-trace foreign bank account.”¹⁴ Although virtually no one disagrees what Rothberg states above, it is still hard to precisely identify exactly when a state is on the verge of failure. The majority of supposed failed states suffer many severe political, security, and socioeconomic challenges, and the failed-state thesis has come up short in sufficiently overcoming of such obstacles ¹⁵. Singular source dependencies are an important part of this study as they will aim to identify Saudi Arabia and their singular resource on oil as a prelude to a failing economy. Conversely, what elements of the Venezuela economy are present and what is their state given how weak Venezuela is right now.

As we have seen above, political instability, the economy and social unrest are three main factors that could contribute to why a state fails. There are a few different arguments however, when it comes to identifying failed states and effect on United States national security. The first argument is how to define when a state has actually failed? There are various scholars that offer differencing definitions on what is a failed state. The first paper of the portfolio will address how to define failed states to ensure there is an understood baseline when looking to determine if a state that may fail. Additionally, a review of new technologies and what, if any impact, they have on the methodology used to identify failed states.

¹⁴ Rothberg, Robert 2002. “Failed States in a World of Terror” *Council of Foreign Relations*

¹⁵ Hashi, Mohamed Omar. (2015) “The Failed-State Paradigm and Implications for Politics and Practices of International Security.” *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 14, article 8, at <http://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/bildhaan/vol14/iss1/8>.

The second paper of the portfolio will examine the on-going debate addressing the question at those that say failed states can't be predicted and determine if analytic modeling can be applied to the identification of failed states.

Finally, the third paper of the portfolio will discuss the effects of certain failed states have directly on United States national security. Throughout the paper Saudi Arabia and Venezuela will be studied. Although one is close to failing, if it has not already failed (Venezuela) and another is far from being a failed state (Saudi Arabia). Given this, the last portion of this paper and argument that will be addressed, will be to understand if there are certain states that the United States will not intervene as it is not in the best interest of the National Security of the United States and its allies. This part of the study will use examples like Libya and Syria in addition to Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to better understand how the United States should protect itself when it comes to intervening in failed state conflicts.

There are two main schools of thought that this paper will use to address the overall thesis. One is that failed states are not one-size-fits-all and that there are times when the United States will have to decide which state failure they will have to intervene in, and which states are not able to fail. Secondly, this paper will also measure and examine the thought that failed states can never be truly defined. While they may never be able to be fully defined, the papers look at certain indicators that we must examine when looking to identify failed states.

Chapter 2: How We Define Failed States Today:

Why do states fail? At first glance, there should be a common definition to determine whether or not a country is failing. Unfortunately, it is not easy to identify the factors for why states fail. While there are numerous factors that help to define a failed state and they will be discussed later in this paper. While there are many definitions of failed states and perhaps the previously mentioned definitions either by Weber or Grant could serve the necessary purpose of defining what is a failed state, for this paper we will use the failed state definition from Robert Rotberg as he defines a failed state in the following manner: "Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens." This is the definition of failed states that will be used when looking at the current states of Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to determine if either state is failing, failed or not failing. Additionally, a comparison will be done to determine if either country falls into what Rotberg outlines below, and if so, is the cause of failure is rooted in a dependency on a singular resource. Part of what needs to be thoroughly examined is if a state becomes "failing" what role does the military play in this failure? Given the importance of the military aspect of failed states the research and analysis done by Hendrix will not be examined given the lack of military weight inputted into their model.

In order to set the stage for what a current failed state looks like, we can look at Libya and what has occurred there over the past 7 years. On October 20, 2011, Libyans captured and killed Libyan President Muammar Ghaddafi in Sirte, Libya. In the previous months, Libyans

begun to revolt against his tactics, and for a Libya free from dictatorship.¹⁶ Almost seven years later, Libya could now be considered a failed state. How did this happen? Libya's major economic resource is oil. Oil is both a blessing and a curse to Libya. It provided the country the economic means to be stable and wealthy compared to other Middle Eastern countries¹⁷ Lower income Libya citizens felt a change was needed, and a revolt necessary which led to Ghaddafi's capture and killing. Are there countries at risk of becoming what Libya now is? This paper intends to answer these questions by posing a simple one: Are nations that are dependent upon a singular resource more likely to become failed states?

Literature Review:

A "failed state" is not a new term, but it has been used more so in the last decade to describe the status of many countries, especially in the Middle East and Africa. The use of the term "failed state" varies greatly. Although Rotberg defines a failed state in his terms mentioned above, other scholars who have attempted to define what a failed state is do offer some context and why we should be careful when trying to articulate what constitutes a failed state. One of these scholars, Thomas Grant, offers this assessment. "First, the definition of 'failed state' could be manipulated to justify intervention where the real object was not self-defense, but bold imperial gain. A pre-emptive notion of self-defense may extend foreign policy to the limits of international law, but empire building, under contemporary norms, plainly will find no principled justification whatsoever. Second, intervention, if unfettered by consensus as to the proper scope of the practice, could disrupt international order, as regional and global

¹⁶ Gaub, Florence. 2011. "Libya: Avoiding State Failure." *NATO OTAN Research Report*, September 13, at https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/137751/Report_Libya_DrGaubSep11.pdf.

¹⁷ Gaub, Florence. 2011. "Libya: Avoiding State Failure."

powers apply inconsistent standards in deciding where and when intervention is appropriate.”¹⁸

Some believe identifying a country as “failed state” is not correct since there was never a chance for that country to be completely and independently successful to begin with, and the nation has been plagued by continuous civil war like Somalia has over the past 20 years.¹⁹

Other countries, like Libya, were stable until a major event like the Arab Spring movement in 2011, led to the overthrow of a stable, albeit harsh, government²⁰. Along this similar approach of believing that certain countries are slated to be failed states, two scholars, Rachel and Michael Stohl point to failures during the Bush administration to not address failed states during the war on terror. “The Global War on Terror (GWOT) became the core of the Bush administration's international security framework after September 11, 2001. The parameters established by this new national security orientation of the administration and the announcement of the Bush doctrine of preemption, have meant that failed and failing states continue to receive less attention, resources, and strategic consideration than they merit. Unfortunately, many of these states still suffer from insecurity, instability, and the threat of terrorism.”²¹. Although the authors point to the Bush administration as holding some responsibility for failed states, they also point to how important it is to have bordering

¹⁸ Grant, Thomas. 2004. “Partition of Failed States: Impediments and Impulses”. *Indiana Journal of Global Studies*.

¹⁹ Brooks, Rosa Ehrenreich. 2005. “Failed States or the state as Failure?” *University of Chicago Law Review* 72, 1159-1196.

²⁰ Magen, Amichai. 2013. The Crisis of Governance in the Middle East: Implications for Democracy, Development & Security. Herzilya, Israel: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, at http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_33980-1522-1-30.pdf?130404150738.

²¹ Stohl, Rachel and Michael. 2008 P.56-60 “Failing the Failed: The Bush Administration and Failed States” *Harvard International Law Review*.

countries serve as allies to prevent failed states and they use Afghanistan as an example.

“Afghanistan's current government also sees Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to control its borders as one of the biggest impediments to maintaining Afghan security. Having buy-in at the sub-regional level will ensure that violence and conflict do not spill across borders, but the intervening force must be seen as a trusted third party, rather than a party to the conflict.”²²The importance of having allies to prevent failed states will be discussed in further detail later in this paper.

Although having allies may help to prevent a failed state, it is important to identify factors that could help prevent a state from “failing” initially. If possible, the development of a paradigm that could point to identifying a failed state, before it fails, would be crucial to not only the security of the nation in question, but potentially the security of other parts of the world. When going back to 2002 we can help to further identify the difference between the economies and governments of failed states. Per one of Rothberg’s original analyses behind failed states, “On the economic side, living standards deteriorate rapidly as elites deliver financial rewards only to favored families, clans, or small groups. Foreign-exchange shortages provoke food and fuel scarcities and curtail government spending on essential services and political goods; accordingly, citizens see their medical, educational, and logistical entitlements melt away. Corruption flourishes as ruling cadres systematically skim the few resources available and stash their ill-gotten gains in hard-to-trace foreign bank account. On the political side, leaders and their associates subvert prevailing democratic norms, coerce legislatures and bureaucracy’s subservience, strangle judicial independence, block civil society, and gain control

²² Stohl, Rachel and Michael. 2008

over security and defense forces. Governments that once appeared to operate for the benefit of all the nation's citizens are perceived to have become partisan.”²³ Although virtually no one disagrees what Rothberg states above, it is still hard to precisely identify exactly when a state is on the verge of failure. That the majority of supposed failed states suffer many severe political, security, and socioeconomic challenges, the failed-state thesis has come up short in sufficiently elucidating the development of such obstacles²⁴. Although this study makes a compelling point, further evidence might be available that could allow for a model to be built.

Financial stability appears to play a role in determining if a state is a failed state. Some work has been done to draw correlations between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and indicators of countries at risk for becoming a failed state, including propensity for developing internal conflict. In historic studies, GDP has been found to decrease by 1.25% when a country is in the midst of wide spread civil war. GDP correlations also extend to the examination of a country by looking at those countries that are dependent on their exports. When a country has primary exports at 25% of their GDP, that country runs a 33% risk for conflict. Conversely, when the export percentage drops 10%, the risk for conflict drops to 11%.²⁵ As these data points show, singular resource dependency could have a correlation to the national stability of a country. Further, another study describes GDP and failed states in this way “An indicator of failure, but not a cause of failure, are declining real national and per capita levels of annual GDP. Failed states, particularly, failed states with vast natural resources—exhibit overall

²³ Rotberg, Robert 2002. “Failed States in a World of Terror” *Council of Foreign Relations*

²⁴ Hashi, Mohamed Omar. (2015) “The Failed-State Paradigm and Implications for Politics and Practices of International Security.” *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 14, article 8, at <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol14/iss1/8>.

²⁵ Holden & Pagel. September 2012. EPS Peaks Fragile states’ economies. What does fragility mean for economic performance?

worsening GDP figures, slim year-to-year growth rates, and greater disparities of income between the wealthiest and poorest fifths of their populations.”²⁶

Overall economic factors are only part of the potential puzzle for failed states. Another part of this study is understanding if the risk for singular resource dependent nations are more susceptible to becoming failed states. To assess the potential impact of single resource dependency, countries that have an outsized dependence on a single commodity and have engaged in civil wars are examined. Table 1.1 shows single resource dependent countries, the duration of their civil war, and the dependent resource.

Table 1.1 – Civil Wars Linked to Resource Wealth, 1990-2002

Country	Duration	Resource
Angola	1975-2002	Oil, Diamonds
Colombia	1984-	Oil, gold, cocoa
Congo	1997	Oil
Morocco	1975-	Phosphates, oil
Sudan	1983-	Oil

Source: Holden and Pagel 2012, 20.

As shown in Table 1.1, you have a variety of countries that span various parts of the world across periods of time stretching two decades. Also displayed is what the resource was that was at the core of the civil war. In each country, we see oil was either the single cause or part of the reason for the civil war. This type of analysis can be used to help further strengthen both philosophies that countries can fail because of perpetual civil war, and countries that are resource dependent can become failed states.

Methodology/Data- Case Studies:

²⁶ Rotberg, Robert 2002. “Failed States in a World of Terror” *Council of Foreign Relations*

This paper begins to take the factors that are learned from the research above and applies them to nations that are at risk of becoming failed states through an examination of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. These nations are examined because of their national security issues and dependency on a singular resource, as both of these countries are heavily dependent on oil. The issues that will be examined to determine if Venezuela or Saudi Arabia can become failed states will be examined by looking at the following factors:

Social Climate: If Saudi Arabia or Venezuela were to fall, the people of these countries would be heavily involved. How the current population views the leadership of each of these countries will need to be examined.

Current Economy: Is Venezuela or Saudi Arabia's economy stable? Is their GDP growing at a steady rate that displays a strong economy? The overall strength of the economy will be examined to understand if either country has a weak economy.

Strength of Military: Is the necessary investment being made to modernize the military for Venezuela or Saudi Arabia to provide the proper strength that could withstand an uprising.

Foreign Allies: If either Venezuela or Saudi Arabia were to get into a state where they may fail, it's important to understand if any other foreign powers are aligned to support them.

Data Presentation:

Venezuela

Economy in Venezuela:

In order for Venezuela to become a failed state, its economy would also need to collapse. Venezuela has had increasing issues with the economy; beginning in 2002 oil workers went on strike in an effort to speak out against president Chavez.²⁷ The strike had such an

²⁷ ²⁷ Suhr, Henning. 2016. Rise and Fall of Regional Powers. Run Down Venezuela's Road to Ruin.

impact, Brazil needed to step in and provide an influx of capital to prevent Venezuela from a complete economic collapse. Additionally, Venezuela continues to rely heavily on their oil production for trade, with their oil exportation making up 96% of the total amount of exports.²⁸

Later in this paper, the GDP of Venezuela will be studied to understand if any of the indicators mentioned above could foreshadow an upcoming revolt from Venezuela citizens; it is worth mentioning that in 2015 Venezuela saw an alarmingly high budget deficit of their GDP at 20%.

²⁹ Combining the economic and political factors above, a determination will be developed about the potential for Venezuela to be a failed state.

Decreases in Oil Production:

Due to the resource dependency of oil, the success of Venezuela's economy is directly tied to the production of oil. In the 1990s, this imbalance worked well for Venezuela. It worked so well, in fact, that Venezuela was one of the richest oil producing countries in the world³⁰. Today the Venezuelan economy is fragile, the direct result of dramatic declines in oil production. Since 2016, oil production has declined sharply, with the U.S. Energy Information Administration reporting that "Crude oil production in Venezuela decreased from 2.3 million barrels per day (b/d) in January 2016 to 1.6 million b/d in January 2018."³¹ . Figure 1.1 shows the average annual crude oil production in Venezuela between 2007 and 2017.

Figure 1.1 – Venezuela Average Annual Crude Oil Production

²⁸ ²⁸ Suhr, Henning. 2016. Rise and Fall of Regional Powers. Run Down Venezuela's Road to Ruin.

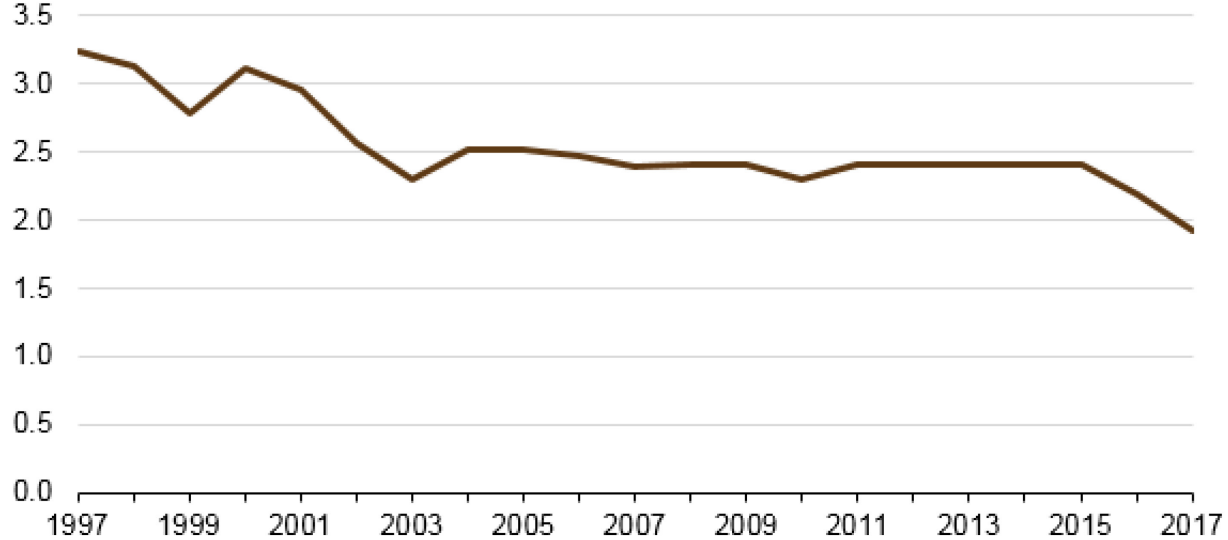
²⁹ Suhr, Henning. 2016. Rise and Fall of Regional Powers. Run Down Venezuela's Road to Ruin.

³⁰ Renwick, Danielle. March 23rd, 2018 Council of Foreign Relations. Venezuela in Crisis.
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/venezuela-crisis>

³¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration. March 13th 2018. Venezuela's crude oil production declines amid economic stability. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=35312>

Venezuela average annual crude oil production

million barrels per day



Source: U.S. Energy Information Agency (2018).

As shown in Figure 1.1, Venezuelan oil production has declined almost every year since 2007, falling below 2 million barrels per day in 2017. The production decline over the past two years is particularly dramatic compared to earlier years. This decline is expected to continue until at least 2019³². Venezuela's overall revenue is directly tied to oil production. These revenues have decreased from \$121 Billion in 2014 to just \$48 Billion in 2017. For a country in which oil revenue makes up 96% of its revenue, this is very concerning³³. Venezuela's oil production decline is the end result of years of the corrupt leadership practices by Maduro's predecessor in Hugo Chavez. During his rule, Chavez removed key critical experts that understood how to develop the country's unrefined oil throughout the early and mid 2000s and the same regime failed to understand the amount of capital needed to continue to develop and

³² U.S. Energy Information Administration. March 13th 2018. Venezuela's crude oil production declines amid economic stability. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=35312>

³³ O'Brien, Matt. January 22nd 2018. The Washington Post. What Destroyed Venezuela's Economy Could Destroy ours too. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/01/22/why-venezuelas-government-hasnt-collapsed-even-though-its-economy-has/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.682fc257ba15

sell their oil because of the removal of these resources.³⁴ Lastly, Chavez used the revenues to fund social programs but inadequately funneled the oil industry and as a result production decreased due to corrupt and ineffective leadership, the same problems that Maduro has been accused of.

Others outside are taking notice of what Venezuela could become in the future. These could be signs of a country at war, but at the very least the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has stated earlier this year that this economic crisis is one of the worst in at least the past 50 years. In addition to revenues and imports declining at an alarming pace, the GDP of Venezuela has also been severely impacted. To give us an idea of how bad the current Venezuela GDP is, consider this analysis from Ricardo Hausmann last year. “The most frequently used indicator to compare recessions is GDP. According to the International Monetary Fund, Venezuela’s GDP in 2017 is 35% below 2013 levels, or 40% in per capita terms. That is a significantly sharper contraction than during the 1929-1933 Great Depression in the United States, when US GDP is estimated to have fallen 28%. It is slightly bigger than the decline in Russia (1990-1994), Cuba (1989-1993), and Albania (1989-1993), but smaller than that experienced by other former Soviet States at the time of transition, such as Georgia, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Ukraine, or war-torn countries such as Liberia (1993), Libya (2011), Rwanda (1994), Iran (1981), and, most recently, South Sudan”³⁵. So, although the GDP of Venezuela is highly concerning, we

³⁴ Rapier, Robert. 2019. Charting the Decline of Venezuela’s Oil Industry. Forbes.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2019/01/29/charting-the-decline-of-venezuelas-oil-industry/#46f306b54ecd>

³⁵ Hausmann, Richardo. July 31st, 2017. Project Syndicate. Venezuela’s Unprecedented Collapse.
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/venezuela-unprecedented-economic-collapse-by-ricardo-hausmann-2017-07>

cannot draw direct comparisons between past failed states and the current GDP decline of Venezuela.

Social Climate in Venezuela:

For as bad as Venezuela's economy has become in the past several years, the military and government running Venezuela have been in equal despair. The leadership of Venezuela has become increasingly corrupt over the past several years and overly harsh to lower income citizens. The citizens have been treated so badly that Freedom House actually rated Venezuela as "not free" last year³⁶. The cause of this harshness is rooted in political instability with citizens clamoring for new leadership, but the current leader Nicholas Maduro, has reportedly thwarted attempts by other political parties as having a voice in their political process. The citizens of Venezuela are strongly against these types of behavior by Maduro. There have been numerous protests against Venezuela's ruling party over the past couple of years. More than 130 people have been killed and 4,800 wounded since April of 2017 during protests against the political regime.³⁷ As a result of these drastic clashes between military and Venezuela citizens, all protest are banned.

Strength of Military and Government in Venezuela:

Venezuela has had years of poor government leadership and as a result, the nation's national security is in a fragile state. In 2002, just three years into the presidency of Hugo Chavez, a coup was conducted by military and business leaders. Chavez however, returned to power in less

³⁶ Freedom House. February 6th, 2017 Venezuela Sheds it's democratic façade.
<https://freedomhouse.org/blog/venezuela-sheds-its-democratic-fa-ade>

³⁷ Hausmann, Richardo. July 31st, 2017. Project Syndicate. Venezuela's Unprecedented Collapse.
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/venezuela-unprecedented-economic-collapse-by-ricardo-hausmann-2017-07>

than 48 hours.³⁸ Since this time, little has changed in Venezuela: in 2014 there were large scale anti-government demonstrations that led to 30 people losing their lives, and almost 1500 detained. And in 2016 and 2017 Chavez imprisoned many members of the Venezuela government that were of a different political party than his.³⁹ To this day, we still continue to see conflicts between the predominately lower class and the current leadership of Venezuela.

The military of Venezuela, like the economy and ruling parties of Venezuela, have also been impacted by the recent crises that have affected the rest of Venezuela. Just this year, members of the Venezuelan military plotted a coup to overthrow the government of Venezuela. The coup was not successful due to early intelligence that forewarned the Venezuelan leadership. Although not successful, the intention for the coup does point to serious issues within the Venezuelan military structure. Otis and Forero state that there are larger issues going on; “discontent in the barracks is at an all-time high, current and former military officers say. Shortages of food, evaporating salaries and desertions have turned the armed forces into a cauldron of conspiracies against Mr. Maduro, these people say.”⁴⁰ If what is reported speaks to the climate of the military in Venezuela today, this is obviously yet another point of concern for the stability of Venezuela in the future.

When Libya fell, their military and government were in shambles. Both of these branches were weak and not able to stop an uprising. In order to understand if Venezuela and Saudi Arabia could protect themselves from an uprising, a comparative analysis between

³⁸ Stuenkel, Oliver. Fall 2017. How South America let Venezuela Down.

³⁹ Stuenkel, Oliver. Fall 2017.

⁴⁰ Otis, Forero. May 18th, 2018. The Wall Street Journal. ‘Pressure Cooker’: Discontent rises in Venezuela Military as Economy Dives. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/pressure-cooker-discontent-rises-in-venezuela-military-as-economy-dives-1526635801>

previous failed countries, and the state of their military and government, will need to be compared to discern what, if any, similarities are from past militaries and governments of countries that have been overthrown.

Foreign Allies For Venezuela :

Venezuela has a strong partnership with two allies that are direct enemies to the United States, China and Russia⁴¹. Given the current and historic conflicts that the US has had with both of these countries, this on the surface may cause the US to be concerned.

Russia

Venezuela is aware of the concern the United States has with a partnership between Venezuela and Russia and has recently exploited that. In October of 2017, Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro was in Moscow meeting with President Putin and discussed the idea that Russia would provide military backing to Venezuela. "I am sure, even if we do not ask, we will be given even more support," this was said in the context of a recent tweet by President Trump's threat of a "military option" for dealing with Venezuela as another way to punish President Maduro ahead of Venezuela's presidential election this year, in addition to financial sanctions that are already in place.⁴² Although this may seem threatening, in reality this partnership may not be as strong as Maduro portrays. Gedan and McCarthy state that "It is not clear that Putin is willing to go far beyond the support he has already offered. For one, in the run-up to Russia's March presidential election, he has promised to cut spending to include reducing Russia's role in the Syrian civil war. Even after the election, Moscow won't be able to afford a bailout; Russia's

⁴¹ Gedan, Benjamin. McCarthy, Michael. January 15th, 2018. "The Limits to Russia and China's support of Venezuela"
https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2018/01/15/venezuela_maduro_chavez_russia_china_112682.html

⁴² Gedan, Benjamin. McCarthy, Michael. January 15th, 2018. "The Limits to Russia and China's support of Venezuela"

economy has been sputtering since oil prices collapsed, and U.S. and European Union sanctions following Russia's occupation of Crimea have not helped." There are other countries, however, that don't see a complete disconnect from Russia. Some believe that Venezuela is a key ally as Russia continues to try to develop relationships with the West and Russia would lose an ally if opposition forces came to power in Venezuela.⁴³ Per a recent article by Antonio Mora "Russia has a vested interest in the survival of Maduro's dictatorship, especially because the opposition has indicated it intends to untangle the Russian ties when it returns to power. Opposition leaders have argued that Russian control over any part of the Venezuelan oil industry is unacceptable and illegitimate. Russian intelligence assets are reportedly ready to help in case the regime is threatened. Mutual ally Cuba has thousands of intelligence and military officers working in Venezuela to quell any dissent and prop up Maduro."⁴⁴ Mora does raise a compelling argument here. Russia needs Venezuela as much as Venezuela needs Russia. If Venezuela does fall, we can presume that Maduro can get safe haven with Russia, but then Russia loses a key ally in the West, something Russia can't afford to do. It would be interesting to see however, if Russia does get heavily involved, the role the United States and NATO would then have in stabilizing Russia.

China

China became a strategic partner with Venezuela in 2007 and up until 2012, China gave over \$40 Billion dollars to Venezuela. This investment was made to develop a strategic partner to purchase oil from China. Since 2013 however, China has cut this influx of cash to almost half

⁴³ Mora, Antonio. Venezuela Quickly Becoming Russia Newest Satellite State.The Hill.
<https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/361176-venezuela-becoming-russias-newest-satellite-state>

⁴⁴ Mora, Antonio. Venezuela Quickly Becoming Russia Newest Satellite State.The Hill.

that (\$22 Billion). China did this because unlike Russia, China cares deeply about their public image. Because they care about their image, the investment that China makes in Venezuela is done so cautiously so as not risk a public outcry from other nations that could claim China was fully backing Venezuela⁴⁵. However, an argument can be made that given the amount of money China has already invested, they have now positioned themselves to a point that China can't afford for Venezuela to fail as China's economy could also be affected. It appears that from the way Chinese economic leaders have talked recently, their relationship with Venezuela is not on the best of terms. An article from Pons and Azihu states "China's policy is not to lend new funds until old loans have been paid off - which cannot happen under the interest-only scheme created in April 2016 because the outstanding balance does not change."⁴⁶ If this indeed is how China will approach their partnership with Venezuela, China may be at a point where they are close to giving up on Venezuela. Pons and Azihu reported that per a Beijing diplomatic source, "China increasingly sees Maduro as similar to former Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, who was pushed out after 40 years in power that dragged his once-prosperous country into hyperinflation and economic crisis. China would have no concern about abandoning Maduro as it did Mugabe when he was ousted, the source said, but does not expect China to take an active role in pushing him out. China looks at Venezuela as another Zimbabwe: a poor return on its investment,"⁴⁷ If this diplomatic source is correct, and China is starting to slowly push away

⁴⁵ Pons, Corina. Aizhu Chen. March 21st, 2018 "China Stays on the Sidelines as Venezuela Spirals Downward" Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-china/china-stays-on-the-sidelines-as-venezuela-spirals-downward-idUSKBN1GX0BO>

⁴⁶ Pons, Corina. Aizhu Chen. March 21st, 2018 "China Stays on the Sidelines as Venezuela Spirals Downward" Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-china/china-stays-on-the-sidelines-as-venezuela-spirals-downward-idUSKBN1GX0BO>

⁴⁷ Pons, Corina. Aizhu Chen. March 21st, 2018 "China Stays on the Sidelines as Venezuela Spirals Downward"

from Venezuela, it could be because China's economy has grown to the point where they give up supporting Venezuela and let it fail rather than continue down a path of poor investments.

Saudi Arabia

Social Climate in Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia will also need to be examined like Venezuela. Unlike Venezuela, the idea of Saudi Arabia potentially becoming a failed state may be harder to believe given their vast control over oil production and the country's complete dependence on oil. The economic, social and religious aspects of Saudi Arabia play a direct role in their national security. From the religious aspect, Saudi Arabia has had centuries of conflicts between the predominant Saudi Arabian people and sects of the Sunni and the often-ostracized Shia class.⁴⁸ The Sunnis are not as looked down upon as the Shia with the Shia's being confined to the Eastern sections of Saudi Arabia and the Sunni population more spread out across Saudi Arabia.⁴⁹ But both of these groups have felt that their voice was not heard enough; during the same Arab Spring revolts that cause Ghaddafi to fall, Saudi Arabia itself had an uprising from both the Sunni and Shia population.⁵⁰ However, unlike in Libya, the government was able to temper the ability for any protest to substantially gain their power. What will be interesting to see, however, is that this area of Saudi Arabia is where most of their oil production occurs, so what potential is there for an attack on an oil installation to hit Saudi Arabia where it really hurts?⁵¹

In addition to tensions between rival religious groups, tension also exist between the upper and lower classes of Saudi Arabia. In the past, this class disparity was not widely reported

⁴⁸ Majiydar, Ahmad Khalid. American Enterprise Institute 2013. Saudi Arabia's Forgotten Shi'ite Arab Spring

⁴⁹ Majiydar, Ahmad Khalid.

⁵⁰ Majiydar, Ahmad Khalid.

⁵¹ Majiydar, Ahmad Khalid

because some Saudi leaders believe the upper class of their country may be portrayed. There have been substantial strides made since 2005 to help better establish tighter bonds among the people of Saudi Arabia including providing more voices to women⁵². This has allowed additional thoughts on how to expand the Saudi Arabia economy and could be partially what Saudi Arabia needs to grow additional economic sectors.

Economy in Saudi Arabia:

Although one can see that a class struggle like one that played out in Libya and led to the downfall of Ghaddafi and is currently going on in Venezuela and other countries, Saudi Arabia is different because of their economy. Saudi Arabia has the ability to sell off parts of the Saudi-owned oil company, Saudi Aramco, to immediately raise more capital to sustain their economy. Although Saudi Arabia may be very oil dependent, there are personnel in the Saudi royal family that are very aware of their strong dependency on oil and have already put a plan together to help resolve this issue. How Saudi Arabia could modernize themselves and remove themselves from being oil dependent will be reviewed by looking at the Saudi Arabia 2030 plan, and see how feasible not only the plan is, but the ability for Saudi Arabia to execute this plan. The Saudi Arabia 2030 plan was initially introduced by the 31 year old deputy crown prince Mohammad Bin Salam.⁵³ It's stated goal is simple: "The goal is to reduce the kingdom's dependence on oil revenues in the long term by cutting costs and diversifying the sources of income, given that the price of oil has fluctuated widely over the years and that oil is a non-renewable resource."⁵⁴ If Saudi Arabia were to become a failed state, its effects on the United

⁵² Kanie, Mariwan. Clingendael Institute (2012). Civil Society in Saudi Arabia: Different Forms, One Language.

⁵³ Even and Guzansky. May 2016. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Reducing the Dependency on Oil

⁵⁴ Even and Guzansky. May 2016. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Reducing the Dependency on Oil

States' national security will be examined. Lastly, like Venezuela, a determination will be made about the likelihood of Saudi Arabia to becoming a failed state.

Current Saudi Arabia Oil Production:

In Venezuela, we saw declines in the amount of oil being produced. In Saudi Arabia, a country that is also incredibly resource dependent upon oil, we see just the opposite. What we are seeing in Saudi Arabia is increases in oil production and according to Bloomberg Analysis, last month (July 2018) Saudi Arabia will begin to produce record amounts of oil. How did this happen? How can Saudi Arabia be producing so much oil and Venezuela producing so little? President Donald Trump has demanded that Saudi Arabia begin to pump more oil and in return lower the cost of gas⁵⁵. He wants to lower the cost of gas in hopes that this could help to swing some voters during the mid-term elections this fall⁵⁶. Saudi Arabia has a strong customer in the United States (something Venezuela does not currently have). The United States is not the only consumer of this increase in demand with Saudi Arabia. According to the same Bloomberg analysis, "Aramco has tank farms within the kingdom, plus overseas in three strategic locations: Okinawa in Japan, Sidi Kerir in Egypt, and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Tanker tracking data for June shows a large uptick in Saudi oil shipments into Egypt"⁵⁷ The ability to have such disparate locations around the world storing your oil and other customers is also key to giving Saudi Arabia the edge they need to stay at the forefront as one of the leading oil producing countries in the world.

⁵⁵ Blas, Kennedy. Mahdi. June 26th, 2018. Bloomberg. Saudi Arabia is planning record Crude Oil production in July. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-06-26/saudi-arabia-is-said-to-plan-record-crude-oil-production-in-july>

⁵⁶ Blas, Kennedy. Mahdi. June 26th, 2018. Bloomberg.

⁵⁷ Blas, Kennedy.

Oil production at an all-time high does not necessarily equate to a strong Saudi Arabia economy. It could be a case where just because you are producing oil, does not mean that you have someone buying the oil. But, in the case of Saudi Arabia and their current economy this is not true. After a rough 2017, it appears that the economy of Saudi Arabia is once again strong with GDP growth occurring in 2018.⁵⁸ It is important to note that it is not just oil that is helping to stimulate this economic resurgence. The non-oil economy also grew over the same period and analysts contribute this growth to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia's objective of stimulating the economy through means other than oil.⁵⁹ This is a good sign for the Saudi economy; they are at least trying to stimulate other parts of economic growth and not relying just on oil. The same Bloomberg analysis does point to some concern about *how* this economic growth was stimulated. A lot of economic growth in other sectors still depends on oil revenues as part of the necessary capital to provide the financial resources for these new non-oil capital adventures⁶⁰. As a result, Saudi Arabia is trying new areas of economic development to become a more well-rounded nation, but given the reliance on oil that Saudi Arabia has had for decades, becoming less reliant on oil will take some time.

Strength of Military and Government in Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia has continued to bolster its military in recent years. Like their economy, Saudi Arabia is making attempts to modernize its military force. Saudi Arabia is doing this to not only develop a more advanced military to make itself a more well-rounded country, but is to modernize its military; it knows there is an enemy close to its borders that would love nothing

⁵⁸Fattah, Zainab. July 2nd, 2018. *Bloomberg*. "The Worst May be Over for the Saudi Economy."
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-02/worst-may-be-over-for-saudi-economy-as-oil-brightens-outlook>

⁵⁹ Fattah, Zainab. July 2nd, 2018. *Bloomberg*. "The Worst May be Over for the Saudi Economy."

⁶⁰ Fattah, Zainab. July 2nd, 2018. *Bloomberg*. "The Worst May be Over for the Saudi Economy."

more than to overthrow the current Saudi royal family as leaders of Saudi Arabia. Despite its incredible amount of spending (Saudi Arabia spends just less than Russia on its defense budget)⁶¹ they still are not the strong military force necessary to protect itself in case of war with Iran. This can be said authoritatively because currently Saudi Arabia is at the forefront of the Yemen civil war. Saudi Arabia military training is more geared towards traditional land warfare techniques; not the type of battles that would occur if Iran were to strike Saudi Arabia. The military leadership in Saudi Arabia has undergone a transformation recently to bring fresh ideas into their military strategies. For the first time ever, Saudi Arabia has even brought in females to help with new ideas and strategies⁶². This was done in part due to the issues mentioned above with how Saudi Arabia is faring with fighting in Yemen. This reform is again just another step towards Saudi Arabia modernizing not only its economy but also its military.

Saudi Arabia Government Leadership:

The government of Saudi Arabia is at an interesting time. The Saudi Royal family has been the ruling party overseeing decades of lush living due to their vast amounts of wealth derived primarily from oil revenue. Over recent years however, and as previously mentioned, parts of the Saudi royal family have wanted to become a more well balanced nation. Part of this balancing is to ensure that the royal family is united into developing Saudi Arabia into what it could be, but not everyone is in agreement with this plan. It's hard to determine exactly who in the royal family is against this plan, because right now many members of the Saudi royal family

⁶¹ Brimelow, Ben. December 16th, 2017. Business Insider. Saudi Arabia has the best military equipment money can buy- but it's still not a threat to Iran. <https://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-arabia-iran-yemen-military-proxy-war-2017-12>

⁶² Amos, Deborah. February, 27th 2018. NPR. Why Saudi Arabia is Suddenly Shaking up it's Military. <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/27/588326061/why-saudi-arabia-is-suddenly-shaking-up-its-military>

are currently in “jail”.⁶³ Jail is a loose term here because the Ritz Carlton in Riyadh is far from jail.⁶⁴ These individuals are detained as part of a massive overhaul to clean up corrupt and unfair practices. The current royal prince is making efforts to do away with harsh treatment of dissidents and giving more rights to women, such as the ability to drive for the first time. However, many people feel that these new “rights” are just a ploy to cover up the still-continued poor treatment of women in Saudi Arabia. Further still, there has been little proof that shows the lower class of Saudi Arabia has been given similar advancements, so there are still issues in Saudi Arabia with how the lower class is being treated.⁶⁵ However, there is little evidence to suggest that the lower classes are in a position that could overthrow or cause harm to the Saudi royal family.

Foreign Allies for Saudi Arabia:

United States

The United States and Saudi Arabia have been allies for almost 70 years, during this time, this partnership has been crucial to both parties. The United States has gained an important ally in the Middle East (one of their few) and Saudi Arabia has gained a dominant Western ally. The United States imports the majority of their oil from Saudi Arabia, it is also a crucial partnership to middle east stability. Iran is both a geographical and ideological enemy of Saudi Arabia and is also an enemy of the United States. As a result, the Saudi Arabia partnership

⁶³ Hubbard, Kirkpatrick. Kelly. Mazzetti. March 11th, 2018. New York Times. “Saudi’s Said to Use Coercian and Abuse to Seize Billions.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/11/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-corruption-mohammed-bin-salman.html>

⁶⁴ Hubbard, Kirkpatrick. Kelly. Mazzetti. March 11th, 2018. New York Times. “Saudi’s Said to Use Coercian and Abuse to Seize Billions.”

⁶⁵ Mckernan, Bethan. September 27, 2017. Independent. Eight Things women still can’t do in Saudi Arabia. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-womens-rights-driving-ban-lifted-marriage-custody-bank-accounts-travel-medical-a7969551.html>

with the United States has strengthened, especially since Donald Trump took office in 2016⁶⁶. There are signs however, that this partnership is beginning to dwindle as a result of years of social injustices from Saudi royalty on its citizens. As Mendi Hasan notes there have been a couple of recent legislative measure taken to ensure Saudi Arabia knows that the United States will not support everything they do. Per Hasan, "In September 2016, a bipartisan bill in the Senate to stop the sale of more than \$1B worth of American-made tanks and other weapons to Saudi Arabia was defeated 71 to 27. Yet, in June of 2017, a similar bipartisan bill to block the \$510M sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia was defeated by a much narrower margin: 53 to 47. "Regardless of whether the number is 48 or 51 or 45, this is an important message to the Saudis that we are all watching," Democratic Senator Chris Murphy, a co-sponsor of the bill, told reporters ahead of the vote. Other senators have gone further. Hasan also quotes Bernie Sanders the senator from Vermont with Sen Sanders saying the following "I consider [Saudi Arabia] to be an undemocratic country that has supported terrorism around the world... they are not an ally of the United States,"⁶⁷ Saudi Arabia, for its part, is not running away from the new found criticism instead they are developing public relations hubs to help spread more positive messages about the Saudi government. Hasan concludes his analysis by stating that there is an understood element in United States politics that will always be loyal to the Saudi government and it would very hard pressed to see any real impactful changes done to the Saudi government from the United States government for quite some time. Saudi Arabia

⁶⁶ Hasan, Mehdi. 2017. "The bizarre alliance between the US and Saudi Arabia is finally fraying" *NewStatesmen*. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2017/11/bizarre-alliance-between-us-and-saudi-arabia-finally-fraying>

⁶⁷ Hasan, Mehdi. 2017. "The bizarre alliance between the US and Saudi Arabia is finally fraying"

does have other partnerships, but none that are impactful enough to the Saudi government in the event of an uprising and as noted in the article uprisings have already occurred in the past few years but not strong enough to actually warrant intervention from another country.

Analysis/Discussion:

During the early readings, we began to get a better understanding of previous countries that failed and whether or not their failures can be linked to present day examples. We will now take the data modeled from the formal research and apply it to both present day Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

Venezuela

Economy in Venezuela:

As discussed in the previous section, Venezuela is currently in one of the worst economic crises in the world. However, is their dire economic situation one that falls into the parameters of a failed state? If we review the reading by Rotberg, failed states exhibit a worsening overall GDP. When looking at this factor, Venezuela seems destined to become a failed state given that Venezuela's GDP has declined by 33% from 2013 to 2017.⁶⁸ However, GDP is not the only economic indicator that should be examined. Additionally, their oil revenue which makes up 96% of their overall revenue, has declined from \$121 Billion in 2014 to \$48 Billion in 2017.⁶⁹ Given this factor coupled with the GDP it seems hard to understand how Venezuela suffers a complete economic collapse. Economies can struggle, but that doesn't completely justify Venezuela becoming a failed state so we must look at other factors as well.

⁶⁸ Freedom House. February 6th, 2017

⁶⁹ Freedom House. February 6th, 2017

Social Climate in Venezuela:

The economy of Venezuela is in trouble, and the citizens are starting to be directly impacted. If we look at how Freedom House views Venezuela, as people being treated so poorly that they aren't even free, and the over 130 deaths since April of 2017 during protests of the current presidential regime, there are currently numerous social issues in Venezuela.⁷⁰ The way Rotberg described social issues for failed states in the earlier reading as "On the political side, leaders and their associates subvert prevailing democratic norms, coerce legislatures and bureaucracies' subservience, strangle judicial independence, block civil society, and gain control over security and defense forces. Governments that once appeared to operate for the benefit of all the nation's citizens are perceived to have become partisan" we can see direct correlations between the social treatment of the Venezuela citizens and what Rotberg consider what a "failed state" is.

Strength of Military in Venezuela:

The military of Venezuela could be the only thing preventing a full-scale collapse from Venezuela failing into the failed state category. This is not that case and is actually the opposite. To best understand how bad the military support is for the current president we should look back to the study done by Otis and Farrero, "discontent in the barracks is at an all-time high, current and former military officers say. Shortages of food, evaporating salaries and desertions have turned the armed forces into a cauldron of conspiracies against Mr. Maduro"⁷¹ We can draw from this that not only is the military not equipped to stop a potential uprising to

⁷⁰ Freedom House. February 6th, 2017

⁷¹ Otis, Forero. May 18th, 2018. The Wall Street Journal. 'Pressure Cooker': Discontent rises in Venezuela Military as Economy Dives. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/pressure-cooker-discontent-rises-in-venezuela-military-as-economy-dives-1526635801>

overthrow President Maduro, but fractions of the military may very well be behind an uprising. Lastly, while contradictory to the Hendrix belief that was previously stated, this is why military strength is a key variable when examining if states are either failing, will fail, or have failed. The military may be the last line of defense to protect or overthrow a leader.

Foreign Allies Supporting Venezuela:

As displayed in the previous section the only strong Venezuela ally is Russia. China will not save Venezuela should the country crumble to a point where they can no longer pay their debts and given that Venezuela can only pay off the interest on their loans right now China stands little to gain from trying to do a full scale prevention of Venezuela leadership being thrown out of office. Russia is the only country that could potentially save them. Russia however can only save them to a point. The increased sanctions the United States has imposed may affect Russia enough that they can no longer become economically strong enough to support Venezuela.

Saudi Arabia

Economy in Saudi Arabia:

When we look at the economy in Saudi Arabia we see a country that is flourishing instead of failing. When using the same methodology we used for Venezuela we see that Saudi Arabia has positive GDP growth not occurring this year. Additionally, oil production has been on a steady increase, thus helping to maintain consistent economic growth. Lastly, because of the Saudi Arabia 2030 plan, the Saudis have begun to diversify their economic platform thus weaning themselves off of their oil dependency.

Social Climate of Saudi Arabia:

There has been and will continue to be conflicts between the Shia and Sunni populations in Saudi Arabia. There will also be issues with the class struggle between the Saudi

Royal family and lower-class citizens. What is not so clear is how long these struggles will last. Given recent advancements in more rights to women, and with new economic opportunities potentially coming as a result of the Saudi 2030 plan, there could be less class struggles in the future. Right now, however, there are still issues with how the Saudis treat certain citizens, but the amount of mistreatment currently going on is not enough to overthrow the Saudi government.

Strength of Military in Saudi Arabia:

Unlike in Venezuela, the Saudi military is loyal to their leadership. Saudi Arabia as shown above is currently spending an enormous amount of money to modernize their military. Saudi Arabia is well aware of the threats that surround them geographically, and know that like their economy, a modern military is necessary for survival. From all current accounts the military is well taken care of by the Saudi leadership and has a high morale. We see no current expectation that any parts of the Saudi military would be weak enough to not prevent an attempted overthrow of the Saudi government. Additionally, there is no sign that parts of the military would try to overthrow the government so that threat of an internal coup is not present.

Allies of Saudi Arabia:

The United States is the strongest ally of Saudi Arabia. This has been the case in the past and will be the case in the future. Although we previously see that some parts of the United States government are not as friendly to Saudi Arabia in recent years, but this is just a fraction of the US government. Additionally, given Saudi Arabia's location, the United States must keep Saudi Arabia strong to prevent the potential for an Iranian led revolt. If Saudi Arabia were to fall it would leave only Israel as the sole key ally in the Middle East and this is a national security

concern. As a result, even if the three factors above all prove to go the opposite of what the data tells us, the United States would do everything in their power, both economically and militarily, to support Saudi Arabia. and they would not be a failed state.

The Potential for Venezuela to Become a Failed State:

When we look at what Venezuela is today the question should not be whether or not Venezuela *will* be a failed state, instead it should be a question of *when* does Venezuela become a failed state? The research that was done by scholars in the early part of this study discusses the problems of Venezuela, and more recent articles by journalists concur with the same thoughts-- Venezuela is at the brink of becoming a failed state. Their GDP is drastically declining, their economy is falling apart, and at this rate Venezuela's entire economy will collapse in just a few years. Venezuela has no other industry to help prop itself up and unless partnerships with enemies of the United State like Russia and China don't support them, then the population that has been oppressed previously by Hugo Chavez and currently feeling so oppressed that they are banned from protesting, will overthrow the current government. If the people of Venezuela do not do this, then the military will. Whether it is another military coup or an overthrow of government from a depressed group of people, the time is ticking before Venezuela becomes a failed state.

The Potential for Saudi Arabia to Become a Failed State:

While Venezuela may be on the cusp of becoming a failed state, Saudi Arabia doesn't have nearly the problems Venezuela does. Instead, Saudi Arabia has re-invented itself. Saudi Arabia saw an economic decline a few years ago; a potential for uprising by the people of Saudi Arabia as we learned from the Arab Spring revolt that never happened in the Majidiyar reading; and the understanding that a pivot away from their oil dependency must occur to resolve both

of these issues with implementing the 2030 plan by the Even and Guzansky reading. Saudi Arabia still has issues with how they treat lower class and female citizens. I believe that Kanie paints too rosy of a picture on how the treatment of lower class citizens has dramatically improved. As we learned in the Mckernan reading, women still can't even marry freely, open bank accounts, or even be allowed to leave their home alone. Until these improvements are made, Saudi Arabia will still have struggles with many of their citizens. These struggles however are not severe enough to think that Saudi Arabia could become a failed state anytime soon. Saudi Arabia's military also has the loyalty and technological advancements to prevent any type of uprising to occur within the military. As long as Saudi Arabia continues to make the necessary advancements to diversify their economy, and no longer relies as much on oil, Saudi Arabia will continue to be a power in the Middle East and not a failed state.

Where the next failed state will take place will always be hard to predict. There are signs that nations should pay close attention to in order to prevent this failure. As was discussed in this case study, a mix of looking at the amount of dependence on a particular good (in this case oil was the primary resource) and how they are using that good to sustain the country's most critical elements--a stable economy, a peaceful population and a strong military is needed. When that good can no longer sustain those items like we are seeing in Venezuela today, there is a strong risk for that nation to become a failed state. A resource dependency can also be a good thing. It can be used to initially develop a nation, then the country could pivot to develop a more modern society like we are seeing in Saudi Arabia with their 2030 plan. The only risk here is ensuring that a nation's population does not want to pivot but would rather continue to rely solely on that resource. This was seen when the current Saudi leadership had to arrest and

detain some of their own family members to force the government leadership and the citizens to understand that this pivot will be the new way of doing business; it's better to become part of the solution than part of the problem.

Regardless of whether or not a nation can fail, the likelihood of seeing another Libya that leads to such a massive amount of civil unrest, like what was seen during the Arab Spring, will be unlikely to happen in the near future. Venezuela becoming a failed state would affect not only Venezuela but potentially a few other border nations to a lesser degree. But, the risk of South America failing as a whole is not possible. Failed states will continue to occur sporadically, but if they do occur, then the nation itself has the necessary risk factors to identify this failure before it happens. If a nation does fail, they will only have themselves to blame.

Chapter 3 The Need to Identify Failed States Before They are Going to Fail:

Failed States have played a pivotal role in United States National Security in the past several years. This thesis continues to better understand why and how countries become failed states to determine and plan where the next failed states could be and what the potential threat to United States security could be as a result of said country becoming a failed state. This portion of the thesis will look at a number of factors, e.g. economic factors, military strength, and social factors to help characterize past failed states. This portion of the thesis, however, will take a more modern approach to identifying failed states by using a more data-driven analysis. As previously stated, it appears that Venezuela could become the next failed state, assuming Russia and China would no longer support them economically, as they have. China essentially has stopped their support but, as we have seen since last summer, Russia has not. While Venezuela becoming a failed state is highly probable, this paper will also use Saudi Arabia as a test case to determine if Saudi Arabia is indeed heading down a path toward a failed state and if they are, what must be done now to prevent this from occurring. Given that Saudi Arabia is a key ally in the Middle East for the United States, but also has an economy heavily dependent on oil, Saudi Arabia presents a unique challenge to the failed state paradigm that could either verify or rebuke what criteria is formally developed to test what makes a country a potential failed state.

Methodology/Data- Case Studies:

This paper begins to take the factors that are learned from the research in the previous paper and applies them to nations that are at risk of becoming failed states through another examination of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. These nations are examined because of their national security issues and dependency on a singular resource, as both of these countries are

heavily dependent on oil. The issues that will be examined to determine if Venezuela or Saudi Arabia can become failed states will be examined by looking at the following factors:

We must first identify what a failed state is, and it is important to identify factors that could help prevent a state from “failing” initially. If possible, the development of a paradigm that could point to identifying a failed state, before it fails, would be crucial to not only the security of the nation in question, but potentially the security of other parts of the world. When going back to 2002 we can help to further identify the difference between the economies and governments of failed states. Per one of Rothberg’s original analyses behind failed states, “On the economic side, living standards deteriorate rapidly as elites deliver financial rewards only to favored families, clans, or small groups. Foreign-exchange shortages provoke food and fuel scarcities and curtail government spending on essential services and political goods; accordingly, citizens see their medical, educational, and logistical entitlements melt away. Corruption flourishes as ruling cadres systematically skim the few resources available and stash their ill-gotten gains in hard-to-trace foreign bank account. On the political side, leaders and their associates subvert prevailing democratic norms, coerce legislatures and bureaucracy’s subservience, strangle judicial independence, block civil society, and gain control over security and defense forces. Governments that once appeared to operate for the benefit of all the nation's citizens are perceived to have become partisan.”⁷² While this is the Rotberg definition, there are others that define failed states a little differently, however for this paper we will use this definition.

⁷² Rotberg, Robert 2002. “Failed States in a World of Terror” *Council of Foreign Relations*

Fragile State Index Model:

Although Robert Rotberg is one of the preeminent experts when it comes to the study of failed states, opinions need to be rooted in some facts. In order to find the best resource to help identify failed states, the Fragile State Index (FSI) will be used. FSI index helps to measure several factors that determine which nations are fragile, which are not, and which are either becoming increasing or decreasingly fragile. This index has been used as a new measure to help identify weak states or those that may soon fail. This is a new approach to the study of failed states. In the past, we would rely almost solely on scholars like Rotberg, but now with a more data intensive approach. This data intensive approach is broken down into three main areas; Pre-existing quantitative data sets, content analysis, and qualitative expert analysis. The content analysis alone is an incredibly detailed approach. The data model for content analysis looks at each of the twelve indicators of the CAST framework that are broken down into sub-indicators, and for each of these, hundreds of Boolean search phrases are applied to global media data to determine the level of saliency of issues for each of those sub-indicators in each country. The raw data includes media articles, research reports, and other qualitative data points collected from over 10,000 different English-language sources around the world. Every year, the number of articles and reports analyzed is between 45-50 million.⁷³ Based on the assessed saliency for each of the sub-indicators, provisional scores are apportioned for each country.

⁷³ Fund for Peace. Fragile States Index Annual report for 2019. <https://fundforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9511904-fragilestatesindex.pdf>

Below is a breakdown of how the measurements are conducted by the FSI. This information helps to make the formula for what will be discussed later in the data results section of this paper.

Quantitative Data:

Pre-existing quantitative data sets, generally from international and multilateral statistical agencies (such as the United Nations, World Bank, and World Health Organization) are identified for their ability to statistically represent key aspects of the indicators. The raw data sets are normalized and scaled for comparative analysis. The trends identified in the quantitative analysis for each country are then compared with the provisional scores from the Content Analysis phase. Depending on the degree to which the Content Analysis and the Quantitative Data agree, the provisional scores are confirmed, or where they disagree, are reconciled based on a set of rules that dictate allowable movements in score in the event of disagreement between the two data streams.⁷⁴

Qualitative Review:

Separately, a team of social science researchers independently reviews each of the 178 countries, providing assessments based on key events from that year, compared to the previous one. Recognizing that every data set and approach has different strengths and weaknesses, this step helps to ensure that dynamic year-on-year trends across different indicators are picked up – which may not be evident in lagging quantitative data sets that measure longer term structural factors. It also helps to mitigate any potential false positives or negative that may emerge from noisy content analysis data. These three data streams are then

⁷⁴ Fund for Peace. Fragile States Index Annual report for 2019. <https://fundforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9511904-fragilestatesindex.pdf>

triangulated, applying a set of rules to ensure the data sets are integrated in a way that leverages the strengths of the different approaches. This approach also helps to ensure that inherent weaknesses, gaps, or biases in one source are checked by the others. Though the basic data underpinning of the Index is already freely and widely available electronically, the strength of the analysis is in the methodological rigor and the systematic integration of a wide range of data sources. Final indicator scores for each country are then produced from this process. The final FSI product is intended as an entry point into deeper interpretive analysis for the user. Though an index inherently ranks different countries – making some more fragile than others – ultimately the goal of the FSI is to measure trends in pressures within each individual state. By identifying the most salient pressures within a country, it creates the opportunity for deeper analysis and planning by policy makers and practitioners alike to strengthen each state's resiliency⁷⁵.

Data Presentation:

The work done by Beehner and Young does highlight some issues with the FSI. Of primary concern is that the FSI uses too many indicators. This is a valid concern that too many indicators could provide false positives. In order to prevent this only a select subset of variables will be used.⁷⁶ Only indicators to show social, economic and military issues will be examined. As previously stated, military stability and/or strength are necessary to look at and while this may contradict what Hendrix believes, it is still necessary for this study. In this section we will dive more into what indicators the FSI could use to help measure both Saudi Arabia and Venezuela

⁷⁵ Fund for Peace. Fragile States Index Annual report for 2019. <https://fundforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9511904-fragilestatesindex.pdf>

⁷⁶ Beehner and Young (2012) The Failure of the Failed State Index. World Policy. <http://worldpolicy.org/2012/07/17/the-failure-of-the-failed-states-index/>

and how they compare to the Rotberg model. If state has either a sociological, military or economic score above a score of 5 that should be a cause for concern. If a singular area is above a 5 a state may be heading towards failure, if two factors are above a 5 they should be consider failing, if all three factors are above a 5 they should be considered a failed state. The intent is to not only find where the two thought processes differ, but where they can show potential areas for improvement. And if areas of improvement can be identified, could those areas be used to improve or bring a state out of failure?

Analysis/Discussion:

In this section, we will look at the actual Fragile State Index measurements. These measurements are from the Knoema data cooperation and are intended to show specific areas that can indicate where countries need improvements. The scale for which these areas are measured is from 1-10 with 10 indicating a high fragility ranking. So, the lower the risk, the better the number⁷⁷ Note: This is the source for all numeric values related to fragile state measurements that are mentioned below.

Saudi Arabia

Economy in Saudi Arabia:

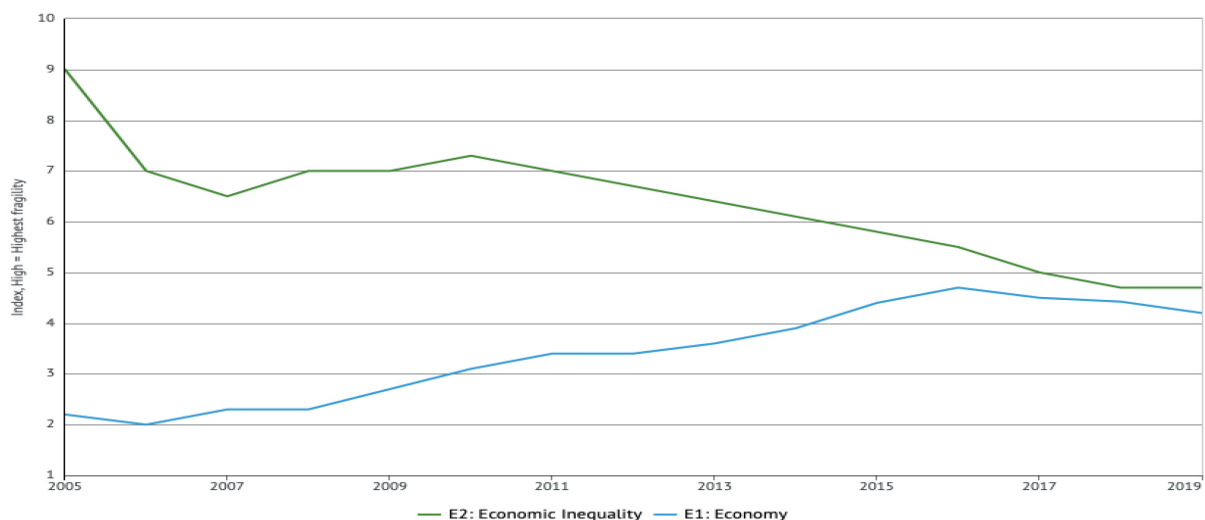
When we look at the economy in Saudi Arabia we see a country that is flourishing instead of failing. When using the same methodology that will be used for Venezuela we see that Saudi Arabia has positive GDP growth occurring last year⁷⁸. Additionally, oil production has been on a steady increase, thus helping to maintain consistent economic growth⁷⁹. Lastly,

⁷⁷ Fragile State Index. www.knoema.com. December 5th 2019.

⁷⁸ Fattah, Zainab. July 2nd, 2018. *Bloomberg*. "The Worst May be Over for the Saudi Economy."
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-02/worst-may-be-over-for-saudi-economy-as-oil-brightens-outlook>

⁷⁹ Fattah 2018

because of the Saudi Arabia 2030 plan, the Saudis have begun to diversify their economic platform thus weaning themselves off of their oil dependency⁸⁰. Although this is positive on paper, we should use both Rotberg’s definition of a failed state and the Fragile State Index to corroborate the success of the Saudi Arabia economy. If we use Rotberg’s definitions and analysis for how we define a failed state, then we see a potential for failure. We can see that elites deliver financial rewards only to those in favor and in Saudi Arabia’s case, it’s the royal family. However, this has not led to living conditions rapidly deteriorating. Instead, living conditions have changed very little. As we can see looking at the Fragile State Index graph below, we see a country that has actually made improvements in their economic inequality area.



The improvements show over the past several years an index of only 4.5 is half of what it was in 2005. What is interesting is the economy of Saudi Arabia, per the FSI, has actually become more fragile with a rating of 4.2 which is more than double what the economy was measuring in 2006.

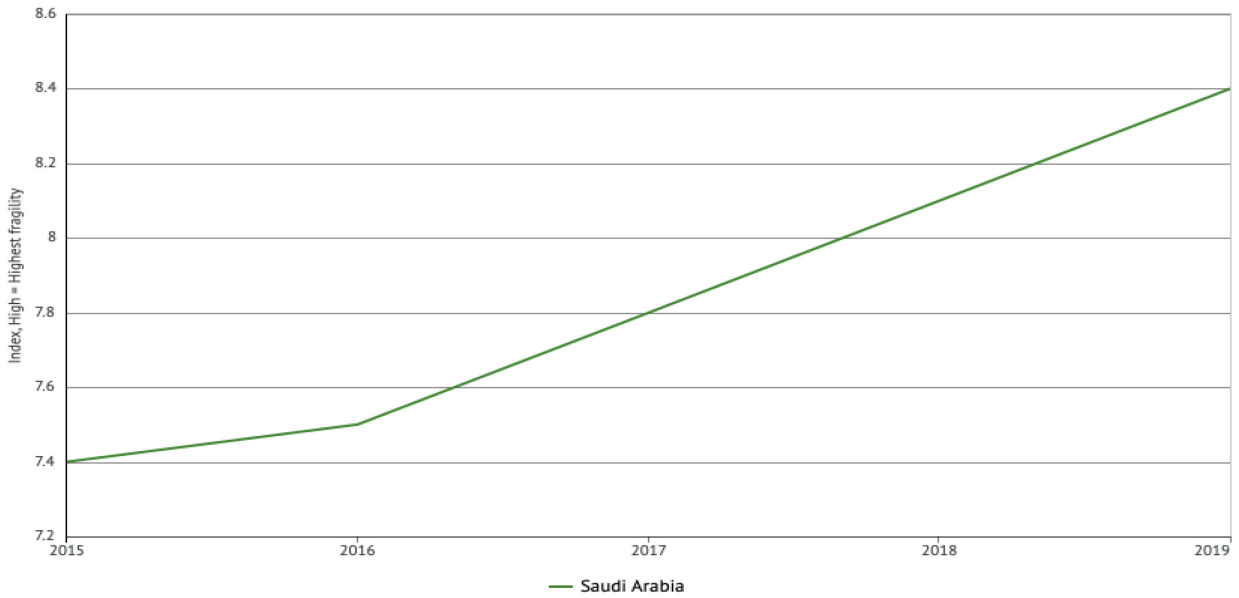
⁸⁰ Even and Guzansky. May 2016. “Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030: Reducing the Dependency on Oil.”

Social Climate of Saudi Arabia:

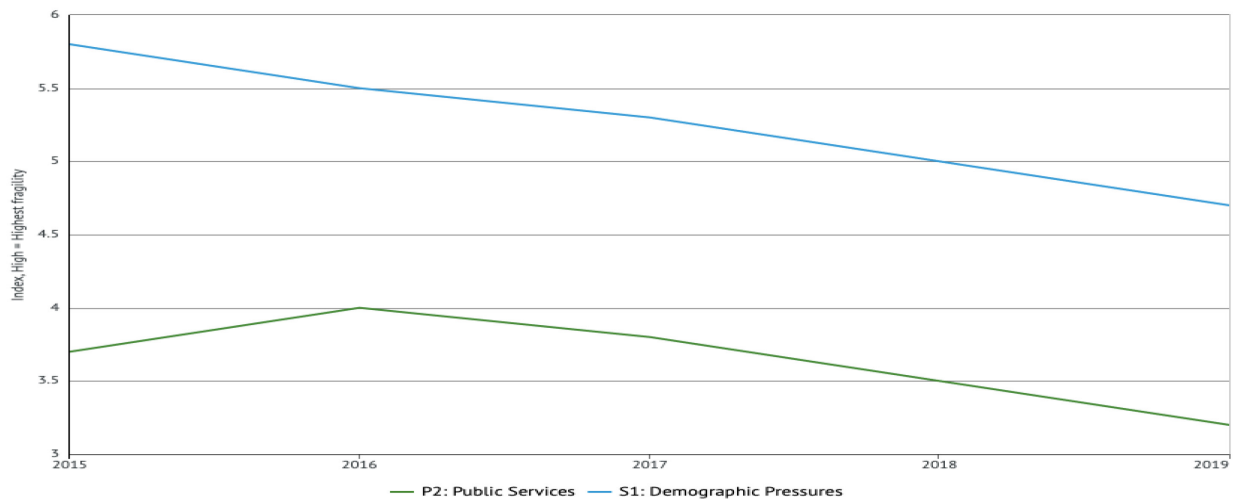
There has been and will continue to be conflicts between the Shia and Sunni populations in Saudi Arabia. There will also be issues with the class struggle between the Saudi Royal family and lower-class citizens. What is not so clear is how long these struggles will last. Given recent advancements in more rights to women, and with new economic opportunities potentially coming as a result of the Saudi 2030 plan, there could be less class struggles in the future⁸¹. Since we see very little resistance from the outside looking in when it comes to the social climate of Saudi Arabia, using Rotberg's model, there is very little chance for some kind of social upheaval. This is hard to measure in Saudi Arabia because the Saudi Royal family keeps an extremely close watch on how citizens feel about Saudi Arabia to the world. As we saw with the murder of Kashoggi earlier this year, and the strong suspicion that the Saudi Royal family directed the murder of a journalist that has been outspoken against the Saudi Royal family it's hard on the surface to use Rotberg's model to determine the true state of the social climate in Saudi Arabia⁸². When we use the FSI model, however, we see how "Group Grievances" has gotten worse in just the past 4 years -- an increase of a whole index point in just this short period of time, from 7.4 to 8.4.

⁸¹ Even and Guzansky 2016

⁸² Washington Post. December 9, 2019 . U.S. bars Saudi diplomat over killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-bars-saudi-diplomat-over-killing-of-journalist-jamal-khashoggi/2019/12/10/6e7531d8-1b65-11ea-87f7-f2e91143c60d_story.html



While “Group Grievances” have gotten worse during this time frame, there are two other factors that have shown improvements. Both the category of “Public Services” and “Demographic Pressures” have gotten better with significant decreases for each category from 4 to 3.2 and 6.0 to 4.7, respectively.

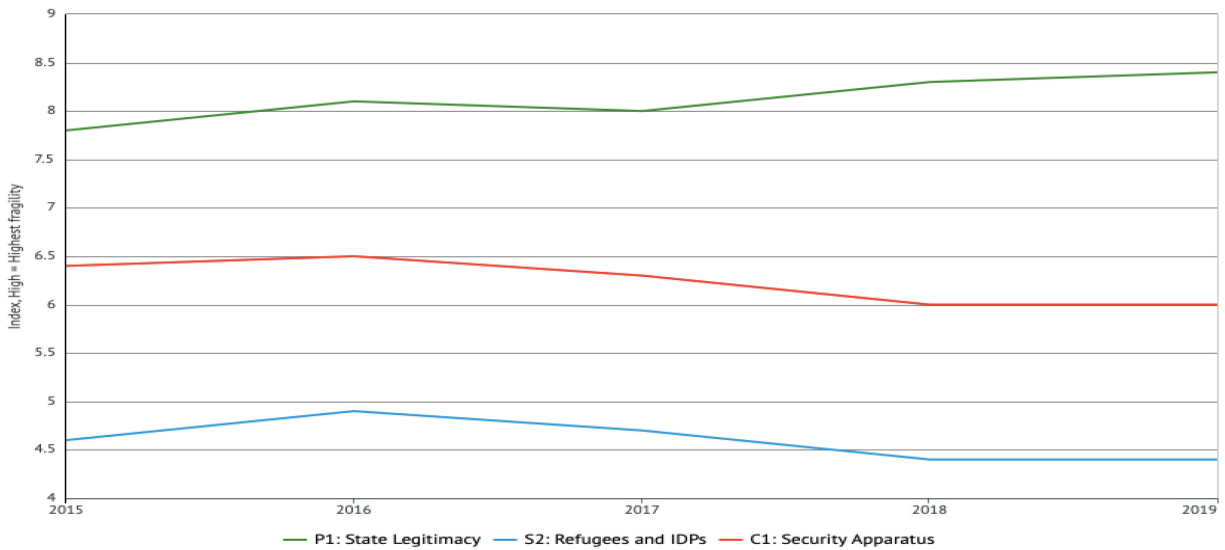


So, while there has been an increase in grievances toward Saudi Arabia, this is being offset with less pressure being applied by its citizens and an increase in public services. It should come as no surprise that the FSI has measured only a slight growth of their fractionalized elites' status since 2006 with only a .2 percent increase. So, although the economy may in fact be increasingly more fragile in Saudi Arabia, the income inequality has improved.

Strength of Military and Government in Saudi Arabia:

Unlike in Venezuela, the Saudi military is loyal to their leadership. Saudi Arabia as shown in section III is currently spending an enormous amount of money to modernize their military⁸³. Saudi Arabia is well aware of the threats that surround them geographically, and know that like their economy, a modern military is necessary for survival. From all current accounts the military is well taken care of by the Saudi leadership and has a high morale. We see no current expectation that any parts of the Saudi military would be weak enough to not prevent an attempted overthrow of the Saudi government. Additionally, there is no sign that parts of the military would try to overthrow the government so that threat of an internal coup is not present. Since the government is still strongly in command and with a military that fully supports it, with the Rothberg model we see very little chance for a military coup or any type of government failure. However, once again the FSI shows cracks in the Saudi foundation. The Saudi military and government strength could best be measured by looking at the state legitimacy, security apparatus and their refugee posture given that an inability to handle an increase in refugees could help to start a revolution.

⁸³ Brimelow, Ben. December 16th, 2017. Business Insider. Saudi Arabia has the best military equipment money can buy- but it's still not a threat to Iran. <https://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-arabia-iran-yemen-military-proxy-war-2017-12>



Only the refugee measurement falls into a low range of fragility. It should be concerning that both state legitimacy and security apparatus are above average in their respective fragility measurements with measures of 8.4 for state legitimacy and a 6.0 for security apparatus. While the security apparatus measurement has improved by three whole points since 2005, the state legitimacy has increased in fragility since 2012.

Allies of Saudi Arabia:

The United States is the strongest ally of Saudi Arabia. This has been the case in the past and will be in the future. Although we previously see that some parts of the United States government are not as friendly to Saudi Arabia in recent years, this is just a fraction of the US government. Additionally, given Saudi Arabia's location, the United States must keep Saudi Arabia strong to prevent the potential for an Iranian-led revolt. If Saudi Arabia were to fall it would leave only Israel as the sole key ally in the Middle East and this is a national security concern. As a result, even if the three factors above all prove to go the opposite of what the data tells us, the United States would do everything in their power, both economically and

militarily, to support Saudi Arabia, and they would not be a failed state. With Rotberg's model here, our premonition that Saudi Arabia will not fail is hard to be determined given that Rotberg doesn't categorize how much allies play to the strength of a nation. This for Saudi Arabia is huge given the details mentioned above. When we look at the FSI, the external intervention indicators show that although there has been some external intervention in Saudi Arabia, it is below average with a measurement of 4.6.



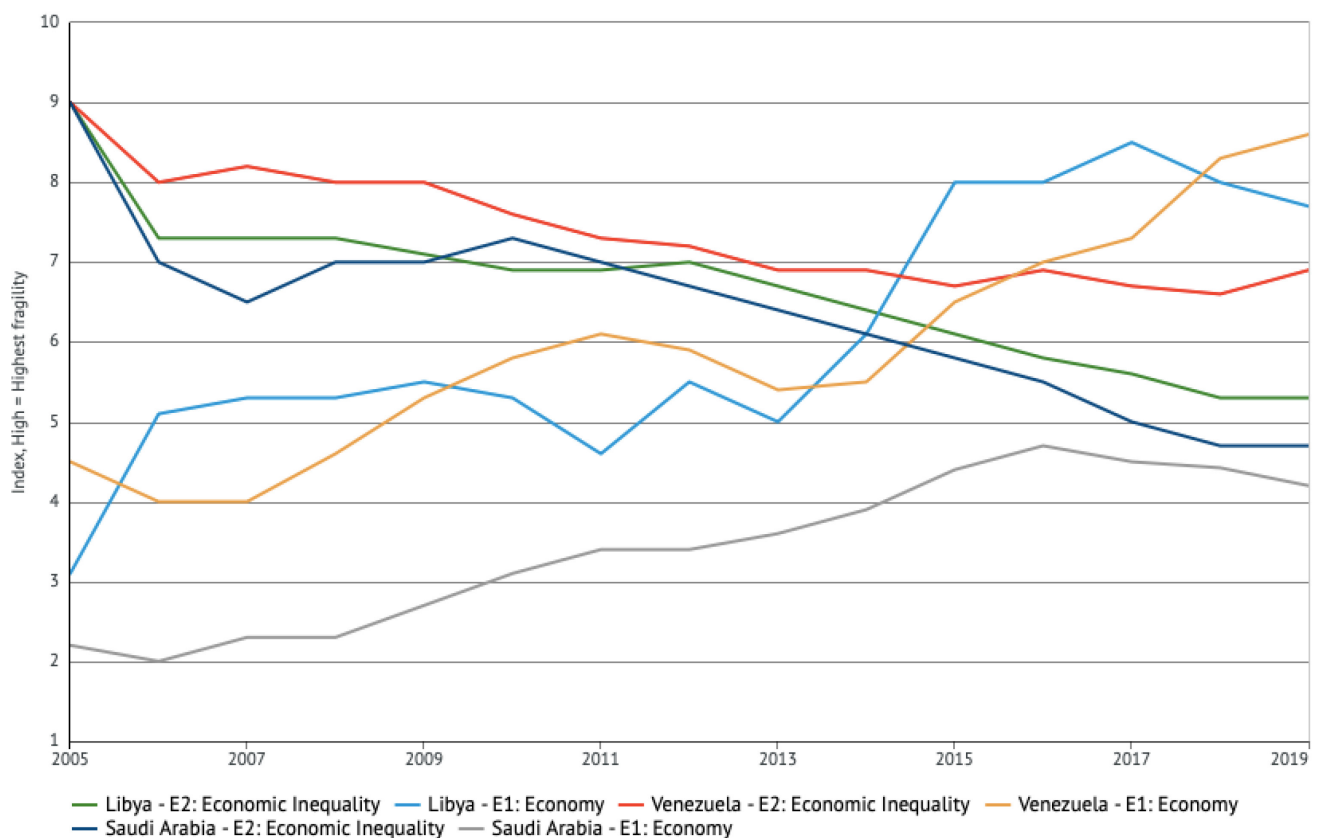
This shows that Saudi Arabia isn't reliant on external factors to keep the country running and contrary to what some may believe, Saudi Arabia is not functioning because of their foreign ally connections to the United States.

Venezuela

Economy in Venezuela:

As mentioned above, part of Rotberg's model is to look at the GDP of a nation; given the staggering decline in GDP in Venezuela it is easy to see that Venezuela, from an economic stand

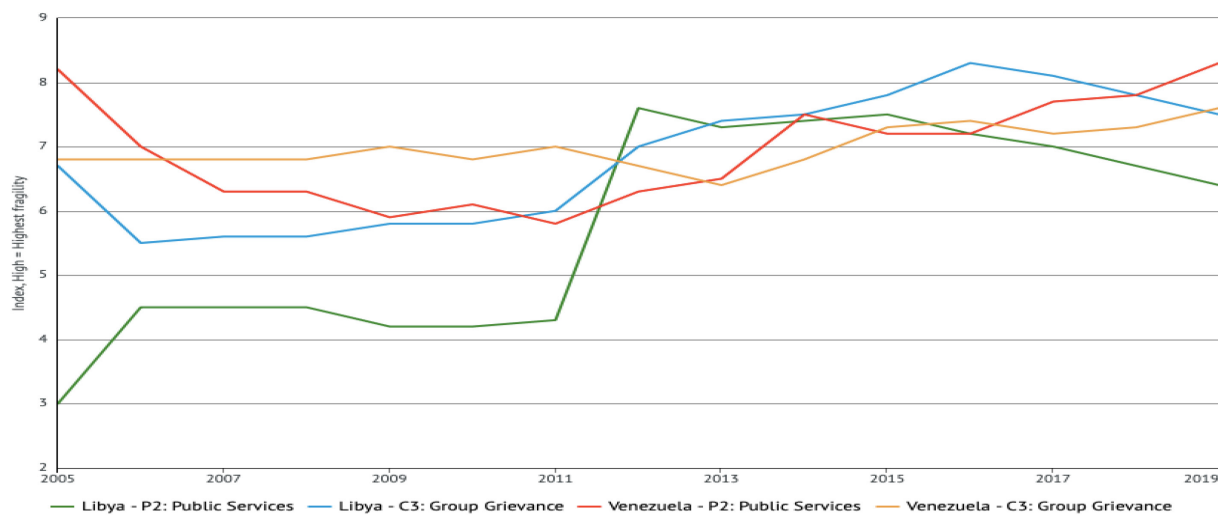
point is indeed a failed state. We see the difference between a stable country and fragile country in the graph below, Venezuela's economy ranks more than twice as bad as Saudi Arabia with an 8.6 ranking. Their Economic Inequality ranks a 6.9 which is more than two points higher than Saudi Arabia. For reference, the economy of Libya (a known failed state) ranks almost a full point better than Venezuela with a 7.7 ranking. Libya also has a 1.5-point better measurement of economic inequality.



So, when comparing Venezuela to known failed states, Venezuela's economy is actually performing worse than Libya.

Social Climate in Venezuela:

The economy of Venezuela is in trouble, and the citizens are starting to be directly impacted. If we look at how Freedom House views Venezuela, as people being treated so poorly that they aren't even free, and the over 130 deaths since April of 2017 during protests of the current presidential regime, there are currently numerous social issues in Venezuela.⁸⁴ The way Rotberg described failed states earlier, we can see direct correlations between the social treatment of Venezuela's citizens and what Rotberg consider what a "failed state" is. While Rotberg sees a clear failure in Venezuela's social climate, it is also important to look at the data behind this hypothesis. As the graph below indicates two of the three categories (Public Services and Group Grievances) Venezuela again has a higher fragility rank than Libya.



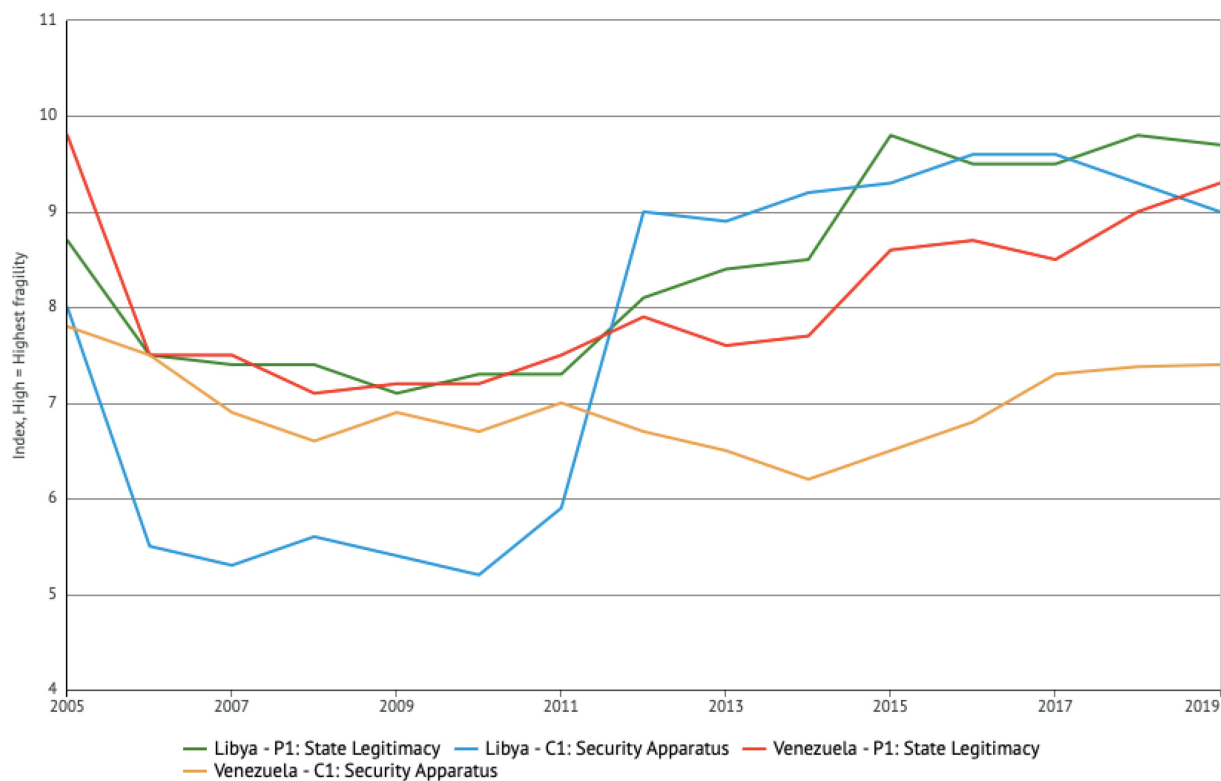
The only demographic that Libya is more fragile than Venezuela is in Human Rights and that is only by .1 percent with Libya having a staggering 9.1 out of 10 to Venezuela's 9.0 out of 10. Sin

⁸⁴ Hausmann, Richardo. July 31st, 2017. Project Syndicate. Venezuela's Unprecedented Collapse. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/venezuela-unprecedented-economic-collapse-by-ricardo-hausmann-2017-07>

Libya is a known failed state and both the sociological scale of Rotberg's measurements and the data driven scale of the FSI both indicate that Venezuela is a country that is failing.

Strength of Military in Venezuela:

The military of Venezuela could be the only thing preventing a full-scale collapse from Venezuela falling into the failed state category. This is not that case and is actually the opposite. If we are to look at the graph below, security apparatus and state legitimacy, Venezuela has a 9.3 and 7.4 respectively, vice Libya's scores of a 9.7 and a 9.



Now this should not make the only case that Venezuela is failing in terms of their political and military strength. These numbers are still incredibly high, much higher than Saudi Arabia and although they are better than Libya, they aren't that much better, and still point to a nation that is failing -- specifically the security apparatus measurement.

Although it may be easy on the surface to see when a state has failed or is failing, to do predictive analysis is hard to pinpoint. For years we have leaned on deep-thinking research analysts to help provide a way to determine what is and what is not a failed state. With the rise of artificial intelligence and data science, we now have new way to help identify where and what could be a failed state. When we look at Venezuela today versus Saudi Arabia we see two drastically different countries. One has a stable economy and one does not. One has strong leadership that has the backing and loyalty of the military and one does not. One has a majority of its citizens united and supportive of what the future for their country holds while the other is a totally at odds with each other. The countries of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia are interesting case studies to examine what is, and is not, a failed state due to the fact that Venezuela is indeed a failed state, and this can be verified by both scholars and by analytics. While Saudi Arabia continues to be an interesting case study in that it seems there are some factors that could lead to Saudi Arabia's failing at some point, but those factors are not nearly enough to lead to a true failure. Using anything purely data driven will always have issues. Yes, there are potential issues that have been previously discussed by the work from Beehner and Young about using the FSI, but there are no perfect arguments or formulas for identifying failed states which is why sometimes the end results of a failed state aren't known until after a state has failed. Using the FSI helps to provide additional data, not a total picture of a state that may or may not become a failed state.

Chapter 4: Direct Effects Failed States have on United States Security

As you have now read, there was difficulty in the past identifying what a failed state looks like. Although many scholars have attempted to identify what a failed state is, there is difficulty in doing so. We have a clearer picture thanks to the introduction of new analytic theories resulting in the development of more precise modelling techniques around how to define and identify failed states. With these new modelling techniques, we have a better definition of what a failed state looks like; we can better evaluate what effect failed states have had and the threat they pose to United States national security.

How failed states have affected our national security has been at the forefront of the United States National Security posture really just in the past 20 years. Former President Bush was one of the first modern presidents to call out “Failed States” by name. He did this in 2002 in his National Security Strategy (NSS). Although President Clinton did mention failed states in his last NSS, President Bush makes a direct tie between failed states and the effect on National Security⁸⁵. The 2002 NSS began with a very telling description how dangerous failed states have become in a post 9/11 world. President Bush stated “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.”⁸⁶ The problem with the NSS in 2002 was that although failed

⁸⁵ Rice. Susan E. U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States. November 25th, 2002. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-foreign-assistance-and-failed-states/>

⁸⁶ Rice. Susan E. U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States

states are called out, there is no actual firm policy that is outlined as explicit measures to help prevent failed states. The article that this information was pulled from was written in late 2002. In 2002, it was thought that the threats to our nation's security ranged from true failed states like Afghanistan and Sudan, failing states like Bosnia and Liberia, to states that are weak like Pakistan and Yemen. It's ironic that two of the nations that now pose some of the most serious threats to our nation's security are from terrorist groups in Pakistan and Yemen. Although the countries in 2002 may have posed different threats. The ways failed states affect national security haven't changed. Failed states can possess two natural threats to United States security; the first is that failed states helped to provide safe havens and areas where terrorist organizations can begin to establish a foundational base to organize and structure their regimes. These areas with weak order security and judicial structure allow for the ability to conduct transactional movement of money, weapons, and people. Additionally, because of the weak structures mentioned above along with a weak educational system, the youth of a nation are easy to exploit and recruit to becoming members of these terrorist organizations.⁸⁷

The second reason failed states can pose a threat to our nation's security is that terrorist organizations that originate from failed states usually begin their operations by starting conflicts that cross the borders of the countries they originate from. As a result, this then weakens the other states around them⁸⁸. The obvious case that comes to mind for this is the previously mentioned Arab Spring movement where numerous countries

⁸⁷ Rice. Susan E. U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States

⁸⁸ Rice. Susan E. U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States

either became failed states or states in danger of failing due to uprising across Libya, Egypt, Yemen Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan⁸⁹. Over the past eight years these countries have failed or are failing resulting in ever increasing serious terrorist threats. Each of these countries had members who were part of ISIS and in turn that group directly attacked several other countries including the United States and key allies like the United Kingdom, France and Germany⁹⁰. ISIS is however not the only example of when multiple failed states become the catalysts for a terrorist organization. It should be noted that the United States has also intervened at times with countries that were not necessarily failed states, but, were a state with a leader that was committing acts that were violating human rights. A notable example of this is what the Clinton administration did in Kosovo in 1999 against Slobodan Milosevic by using force to remove a leader.⁹¹

For the past few decades parts of Africa, particularly northern and central Africa have seen brutally harsh civil wars. These civil wars occurred in Kenya, Uganda, the Congo and other countries in Africa. Combined with the civil conflicts in the Sudan and Somalia these countries are a hot bed for the Al Qaeda organization and has served as a sanctuary and staging ground for Al Qaeda operations in Africa and other global terrorist organizations⁹². These terrorist organizations have operated in various parts of Africa while continuing their terrorist operations in the Middle East. They have been able to recruit and train fighters, finance

⁸⁹ Koser, Khalid. Migration, Displacement and the Arab Spring: Lessons to Learn. March 12th, 2012. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/migration-displacement-and-the-arab-spring-lessons-to-learn/>

⁹⁰ Haltiwanger, John ISIS In America How Many Times Has Islamic State Attacked America? December 11th, 2017. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/islamic-state-america-attacks-744497>

⁹¹ REDD, S. B. (2005). The influence of advisers and decision strategies on foreign policy choices: [US] President Clinton's decision to use force in Kosovo. *International Studies Perspectives*, 6(1), 129–150.

⁹² Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen. *Survival* (00396338), 53(1), 95–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2011.555605>

operations and successfully conduct terrorist acts outside of Africa⁹³. They have also been able to find chemical weapon components from Sudan and in 2002 it was well known that these organizations looked for and actively recruited various rogue nuclear, chemical and biological weapons scientists that were from various parts of the Soviet Union, South Asia, Korea and Libya.⁹⁴

Whether it be from Africa or the Middle East, both of these regions have produced several types of conflicts that have caused significant problems for the United States and its allies during the decades-long battle against terrorism. America and its allies have had to deal with refugee overflows, billions of monies spent, humanitarian and peacekeeping initiatives, in addition to the ongoing issues of attempting to stop weapons proliferation⁹⁵. Where there is one major difference between the two regions and the terrorists that live in them is how the United States and its allies have addressed the threats both of these regions have posed. While both regions have terrorists that have and potentially will in the future affect United States national security, we have addressed these threats very differently during the major efforts to stop terrorism since 2001. As this paper will show, the United States and its allies have to choose which states they can't allow to fail, and which states *can* fail and will only have a minimal impact to national security. This paper will examine both Africa and the Middle East to examine the difference in response to crisis in the failed states in these areas. After the examination of these areas, it will be explained why Venezuela has become a failed state and

93 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

94 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

⁹⁵ Rice. Susan E. U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States

the United States and its allies have done very little to intervene, but why the United States and its allies could not let Saudi Arabia fail.

Examination of Failed States in the Middle East

The Middle East has been one of the single most unstable regions in the world for the past several decades. With this instability comes the ability to fail. In this section, we will review three nations that have either failed completely or are close to failing, based off of the failed state index model. Each of these nations have experienced catastrophic losses of human life as a result of this failure. These nations, however, have had the United States and its allies try to provide some type of support to help prevent their respective situations from getting worse. The nations that will be examined are Syria and Libya. These nations had different reasons for their current situation, are still considered failed or failing states.

Syria

It's easy at first glance to see why Syria today is thought by some to be a failed or failing state. This country has been involved in a brutal civil war that has seen close to half a million killed and three times that amount evacuated in fear of ending up like those half million individuals that paid the ultimate price for freedom in Syria. Syria has for years been led by a brutal dictator named Bashar Assad. In 2011, peaceful protests to speak out against Assad, were matched by deadly force by Assad's troops⁹⁶. Those that weren't killed were arrested, put in prison and then tortured. As a result of this torture, many of those that came out of prison came out even more against Assad. With this additional stronger resistance against Assad, one-time peaceful citizens started a group of rebel citizens that together began to push back against

⁹⁶ Keith A. Grant & Bernd Kaussler (2020) The battle of Aleppo: external patrons and the victimization of civilians in civil war, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 31:1, 1-33, DOI: [10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959](https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959)

Assad. One of the most populated areas where this occurred was in the major city of Aleppo⁹⁷. Aleppo would prove to be a pivotal point in not just the civil war for Syria, but how the world would view the collective group of uprisings that have occurred over the past decade in the Middle East. Aleppo helps to show what can happen when a state falls as close to half of the city of Aleppo became ruled by the militia citizens that were once imprisoned or poorly treated by president Assad⁹⁸. These militias were made up of multiple desperate groups that consisted of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the beginnings of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), The Levant Front (al-Jabha al-Shamiya), al-Nusra, and Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and they were fighting not only the Syrian military, but also parts of Iranian militias, Hezbollah and the Russian military.⁹⁹ The Russian military came into the fight closer towards the end of the major fighting which concluded in 2017, but none the less a major non-failed state became directly involved in attacking innocent civilians in Syria.¹⁰⁰ Long before Russia became involved there were factors that led to why Syria fell that were more than just Assad treating the citizens of his country poorly.

Why Syria Fell

Although Aleppo and other parts of Syria “fell” in 2012, the factors that led to Syria becoming a failed state truly began several years before that. Some think that it was around the time that Assad was re-elected in 2008 that he began to take a dramatic turn towards a more violent leadership approach.¹⁰¹ While this may be true, instead we can begin the analysis on the

⁹⁷ Keith A. Grant & Bernd Kaussler (2020) The battle of Aleppo: external patrons and the victimization of civilians in civil war, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*

⁹⁸ Keith A. Grant & Bernd Kaussler

⁹⁹ Keith A. Grant & Bernd Kaussler

¹⁰⁰ Keith A. Grant & Bernd Kaussler

¹⁰¹ Cordesman, A. H. (2017). *Stability Operations in Syria: The Need for a Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs*. *Military Review*, 97(3), 44–63

fall of Syria by using similar variables that were used previously in this paper. First, we can examine the economic standing of Syria; the GDP of Syria stood at \$60.2 billion in 2010 and was set to grow steadily in the years leading up to 2015. Unfortunately, this never came to fruition; instead, what has occurred has been losses of \$169 billion from lost GDP as compared with pre-conflict projections, and \$89.9 billion from accumulated physical capital loss. The Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR) says that overall GDP loss has been three times the size of the country's GDP in 2010.¹⁰² While obviously GDP is not the only factor to look at to understand if an economy is stable or not, we should also look at unemployment which affects both the economy and the social climate of a country. Here is another area where we can see a clear "failing"; in 2011, the unemployment was around 15 percent - - that rose dramatically to 48% in 2014¹⁰³. Numerically speaking, this resulted in close to three million Syrian citizens who ended up unemployed during the conflict. It was not just the three million that lost their jobs, however, those three million individuals were responsible for another roughly twelve million citizens as they were dependents. As a result, those living below the poverty line in Syria rose from twenty eight percent in 2010 to eighty percent in 2015. Also contributing to the poor social climate was the previously mentioned citizens who were peacefully protesting issues with Syrian leadership and were thrown in jail¹⁰⁴.

The military has consistently had a strong alliance with Assad and this was put to the test during the initial conflicts with citizens in 2011. The Syrian military members have historically not paid very well, but given that they were part of the military, they were treated

102 Cordesman, A. H. (2017). Stability Operations in Syria: The Need for a Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs.

103 Cordesman, A. H. (2017).

104 Cordesman, A. H. (2017).

like wealthy citizens and used their positions in the military to their advantage by extorting and bribing their way to receive additional goods or monies to offset their salaries¹⁰⁵. Because of this ability few soldiers left the military and there was never a chance for any type of military coup as we saw with Venezuela. What gave the military problems, and what continued to cause more citizens to join in with the initial citizens who were protesting, was how the military dealt with protesters. The Syrian military would regularly use excessive force and at times it was shown that the Syrian military had used chemical weapons on its own citizens.¹⁰⁶ Given that the Syrian military is established in such a way that military barracks are located within cities it became easy for the dozens of various militias to target military members as a way to retaliate to the unfair practices that were deployed against them¹⁰⁷. The military did not just go after protesting citizens, however. After the majority of the conflict had ended it was determined that close to 90% of the citizen deaths during the Syrian conflict were caused by the Syrian military¹⁰⁸. The military however was also affected with losing close to 60,000 troops themselves.¹⁰⁹ Although there were some issues with dissenters, there was never a time when a large enough group of dissenters developed their own plot to overthrow the government.

What Syria taught us is, regardless of what model is used Syria was clearly failing not long after the Arab Spring began and really began to fail once the violence escalated and rebel groups became more refined. Then Syria became what it is today, a total failed state.

105 Gaub, F. (2018). The Syrian Military: The Day After. *Military Technology*, 42, 179–183

106 Gaub, F. (2018). The Syrian Military: The Day After.

107 Cordesman, A. H. (2017).

108 Cordesman, A. H. (2017).

109 Gaub, F. (2018).

Yemen

While much of the world has focused on Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and other nations in the Middle East as breeding grounds and defacto command centers for several terrorist organizations, the country of Yemen has also played a major role in the global war on terror. The Al-Qaeda branch in Yemen is still known as one of the more violent branches of all Al-Qaeda and for years was the home to some of Al-Qaeda's most dangerous terrorist members.¹¹⁰ Al Qaeda had, and still has such a strong presence that even other terrorist-like organizations like ISIS cannot gain a footprint there. Yemen is yet another failed state that has played a pivotal role in the Middle Eastern political and social landscape.¹¹¹ The factors that led to Yemen failing are similar in nature to what we have seen with other failed states that have been examined thus far. For decades Yemen was ruled by Ali Abdullah Saleh¹¹². Like most of the Middle East in 2011 protests in Yemen began to erode the leadership of an already fragile state. At first the majority of the early protests that broke out were led by youths demanding a regime change¹¹³. Not long after these initial protests, high ranking members of the Yemen political structure began to use that initial messaging as a platform for themselves to increase their power in the Yemeni politics. The goal these individuals had was to ultimately replace Saleh with someone more in line with their interests.¹¹⁴ The problem however is the everyone wanted to be the new president of Yemen and this type of infighting led to a government collapse. It was not long after this collapse that militias associated with AQAP seized territories

110 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen

111 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

112 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict. (2019). Congressional Digest, 98(2), 5–9

113 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

114 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

in a southern province of Yemen.¹¹⁵ This became the first step to what would lead to AQAP ultimately controlling more provinces and over-running the military in other areas of Yemen.¹¹⁶ This is an example of how a nation can fail when the interior of a political structure is weak and begins to lead to failure internally. Issues with the economy started the initial social uprising in Yemen, but it was the instability within the governmental structure of Yemen that led to the ultimate collapse of Yemen and why today it is considered one of the most dangerous countries in the Middle East.

The United States and its Allies Response to Failed States in Yemen and Syria.

Yemen

After the attacks of September 11th, 2001, the United States entered a new way of fighting wars with unconventional warfare missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These types of missions throughout the better part of the 2000s would test the United States Services with a new challenge adapting to a new type of warfighter. This new type of warfare techniques would also prove to be pivotal during the Arab Spring movement. Both Yemen and Syria have proven to be countries that pose a national security threat to the United States with Syria being a foundational area for the rise of ISIS/ISIL and Yemen having predominant members of AQAP.¹¹⁷ Both of these groups planned attacks against the United States and their allies in this region. Unlike Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States never went into a large-scale unconventional war with either country. Instead the United States decided to take a different approach in trying to diffuse the situations in both Syria and Yemen.¹¹⁸

115 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

116 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

117 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen. *Survival* (00396338), 53(1), 95–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2011.555605>

118 Phillips, S. (2011). Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Yemen.

United States Support to the Conflict in Yemen

After Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh was removed from power in 2012, the problem that faced Yemen, the Middle East and the United States was what to do next? What was proposed was a coalition of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other members of the international community get together and attempt to broker a compromise. A transition plan was developed, and in 2012 former Vice President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi became president.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, this was short lived; in January 2014, new president Hadi was still trying to stand up a formal government structure.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, anti-government groups were still prevalent in Yemen and one in particular, the northern Yemeni Houthi movement, used military force to end the attempted governmental structuring work that was to be done by president Hadi. In Spring 2014, a military offensive against various tribal allies of President Hadi was launched by this group.¹²¹ The Houthis were joined by forces still loyal to former President Saleh, and together they created an alliance that unfortunately proved to be a formidable opponent to President Hadi and his allies.¹²² Later in 2014 this new coalition of Houthi militants took over the capital of Yemen. In 2015, the Houthi forces had continued their advancements throughout Yemen so much so that President Hadi was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, this coalition of Houthi Militants had not only eroded all the work the United States and other countries in the Middle East had done, but in late 2017, the Houthi-Saleh alliance unraveled, and former President Saleh was killed on December 4, 2017.¹²³ Throughout

119 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

120 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

121 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

122 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

123 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

this entire process the United States chose only to participate in select operations in Yemen that were aimed to not stand up a new Yemen government but instead aimed to remove threats posed by terrorist organizations. To give you an idea of the United States current role in Yemen, this statement from the current administration was made last year in its semi-annual War Powers letter to Congress:

“A small number of United States military personnel are deployed to Yemen to conduct operations against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-Yemen. The United States military continues to work closely with the Government of Yemen and regional partner forces to dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by those groups. Since the last periodic update report, United States Armed Forces conducted a number of airstrikes against AQAP operatives and facilities in Yemen, and supported the United Arab Emirates- and Yemen-led operations to clear AQAP from Shabwah Governorate. United States Armed Forces also conducted airstrikes against ISIS targets in Yemen. United States Armed Forces, in a non-combat role, have continued to provide military advice and limited information, logistics, and other support to regional forces combatting the Houthi insurgency in Yemen. United States forces are present in Saudi Arabia for this purpose.”

¹²⁴ Although this quote was from January of 2019, this is still the posture of the United States and how they are currently operating with regard to the threat of an unstable Yemeni country.

124 Civil War in Yemen: Background and Current Conflict.

Syria

As previously mentioned, the current ongoing civil war in Syria is one of the worst cases of civil violence of the century. What makes this situation a case study for how to deal with failed states is political ramifications of intervention in Syria to the Syrian government's strong alliance to Russia. Here we have a failed state that is supposedly being aided by a powerful nation, but this nation is also an enemy of the United States. As a result of this additional complexity the United States has adopted a similar model to what has been done in other failed states. After several attacks against the United States and its allies, the United States began an effort called "degrade and defeat" of ISIS.¹²⁵ The United States along with other countries from the Middle East and the West conducted a series of bombings and cruise missile attacks against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria.¹²⁶ What was interesting about these strikes is that the Iraqi government approved these strikes to be conducted, understanding that a foreign nation was about to bomb their country, but for the good of defeating ISIS.¹²⁷ Unfortunately, Syria did not give the same approval. Not only did Syria not approve of the bombings, but President Assad claimed that the air strikes were actually a violation of international law.¹²⁸ The United States claimed these attacks were justified because of the humanitarian violations that were occurring in Syria as a result of the continued murdering of innocent citizens in Syria as a result of ISIS and a right to use force in the territory of failed states.¹²⁹ Syria still did not agree it was a just cause for action so the United States claimed they were acting on behalf of the best interest of the

125 Schar, M. P. (2016). How the War against Isis Changed International Law. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 48(1/2), 15–67

126 Schar, M. P. (2016). How the War against Isis Changed International Law.

127 Schar, M. P. (2016).

128 Schar, M. P. (2016).

129 Schar, M. P. (2016).

Iraqi government. The United States was able to make this claim thanks in part to what former President Bush mentioned in his 2002 NSS regarding failed states - - that since the 9/11 attacks this type of force is justified if a government is unable or unwilling to suppress the threat that has been posed by citizens of the respective country.¹³⁰ These bombings did make an impact on ISIS as the majority of the bombings occurred from August 2014 through August 2015, and the U.S.-led coalition conducted more than 5,500 airstrikes on ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria, resulting in the deaths of over 15,000 ISIS fighters.¹³¹ The United States used the spread of ISIS to justify initial attacks but, similar to Yemen, it was looking to conduct a Nation State building effort. In fact, it is now quite the opposite. Given that Syria tied themselves early on to Russia and a few other nations on a smaller scale like Iran and Turkey, the United States believes that these nations should be the ones to ensure that all of the infrastructure and the economy that was crippled by the Syrian civil war are properly established.

Examination of Failed States in Africa

Libya

In Syria, Assad has strong control over his country and will presumably for quite some time, thanks to his allies the Russians. Assad was one of the few leaders that survived the Arab Spring movement as he remained the leader of Syria. In Libya, however, the leader Mummar Qaddafi did not, he was overthrown by the Libyan citizens. Libya even after overthrowing its former leader Mummar Qaddafi, remains a failed state and may remain such for the foreseeable future. Reviewing Libya before the Arab Spring and the removal and murder of

130 Schar, M. P. (2016).

131 Cordesman, A. H. (2017).

Qaddafi, we find a nation that was a direct target of the United States and NATO for the treatment of the its citizens in the Early 2010's. ¹³² Moreover, the social climate in Libya ensured the eventual collapse given the well-known atrocities its citizens endured at the hands of Qaddafi. Qaddafi spent the better part of his long multi-decade reign as one of the most brutal dictators in the world. In February of 2011 multiple reports began to surface that Qaddafi, like Assad, had ordered his military and police forces to conduct arbitrary arrests, torture and even carry out murder when necessary of his own citizens.¹³³ This was the final straw in the brutal Qaddafi reign. As a result, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a resolution calling for an immediate end to the violence and imposing an arms embargo on Libya and sanctions against the Qaddafi family and key regime members.¹³⁴ Similar to the Assad reign in Syria, the continuing social unrest became the serious threat for an over-through of Qaddafi reign of terror.

As in Syria, the military element of Libya was fiercely loyal to their leader. Given this loyalty Qaddafi thought he was completely immune from being removed from office. Similar to Syria, a number of desperate militias joined together to overthrow Qaddafi. What makes the Libyan fall different than the Syrian one however was how these militias were enabled to do so. NATO along with the United States, France and Qatar were becoming actively involved in the toppling of Qaddafi.¹³⁵ The military strategy involved heavy use of NATO air power to destroy military targets from above. Additionally, Qatar, with the Obama administration's blessing, flew

132 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya? Newsweek Global, 167(1), 18–21

133 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

134 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

135 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

in weaponry and handed it select militias—many led by hard-core Islamic Jihadis.¹³⁶ These Jihadis had been Qaddafi's principal opposition for more than three decades. A significant number jihadis that received arms and training were members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), the LIFG was a group of Al-Qaeda veterans of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, several of which were sent back to do prison time in Libya or at Guantánamo Bay.¹³⁷ In 2005, Qaddafi reached a deal to give up weapons of mass destruction with Washington, his son, Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, persuaded his father to try to reach an accommodation with his Islamist opponents.¹³⁸ In return for signing a document saying the rebels that sought to originally overthrow Qaddafi would no longer oppose the regime, and once signed scores were released from Libyan jails.¹³⁹ As a result of this, Qaddafi indirectly had a hand in his own downfall.

While we see a clear issue with the social climate in Libya in the early 2010s that helps to fit with the previously mentioned model, Libya, like Syria, had a loyal military establishment to their president. We also need to understand the economic platform of Libya leading up to its failure. Libya, like Saudi Arabia had a heavy economic dependency on oil. In 2012 around the time that Libya fell, Libya was actually one of the more successful countries in Africa per their market GDP.¹⁴⁰ In 2012, Libya had a GDP per capita of \$12,500.¹⁴¹ Like Saudi Arabia, they also had extensive oil reserves the led to this wealth. In 2012 Libya was the owner of the world's ninth-largest reserves of oil with 47.1 billion barrels, and at this time were considered an extremely lucrative 'oil bearing' province. In 2011 Libya had reserves to carry them through the

136 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

137 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

138 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

139 POWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

140 Siddiqi, M. (2012). Libya: The ultimate emerging market. Middle East, 435, 28–32

141 Siddiqi, M. (2012).

next 100 years, compared to 80.7 years in Saudi Arabia.¹⁴² These is all the more staggering considering that only one-quarter of its territory had been explored for oil by this time. These statistics are misleading, since the Libyan citizens never really received the benefits of this economic success. Where other failed states had poor economic growth, Libya could have had a strong economy, but unfortunately in 2011 the basic Libyan infrastructure was in total disrepair.¹⁴³ Basic items like power, transportation, water and sewerage systems and the telecommunications infrastructure were all in poor condition compared to the standards of Middle Eastern and African countries.¹⁴⁴ It's these types of poor conditions that helped to contribute to the people of Libya overthrowing Qaddafi. So, the combination of poor economic support and treatment of its citizens, like we saw in Syria, are the two main reasons for Libya failing.

Somalia

During the past 30 years, Somalia has been a nation surrounded by constant conflict and as a result has been a nation that other countries have worried about as a national security concern. Somalia was of such great concern to the United States that in 2002, an entire military operation was focused on Somalia and other countries in Africa known as the "Horn of Africa". This operation was called "Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa" (OEF-HOA) this operation was launched to support military operations against the al-Qaeda network and associated forces in the Horn of Africa¹⁴⁵. Somalia, similar to Yemen, has had a strong terrorist

142 Siddiqi, M. (2012). Libya: The ultimate emerging market.

143 Siddiqi, M. (2012). Libya: The ultimate emerging market.

144 Siddiqi, M. (2012). Libya: The ultimate emerging market.

¹⁴⁵ Malito, Debora. *Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia*. Third World Quarterly. October, 2015.

organizational presence. Unlike the other failed states, Somalia has been a failed state since the mid 1990's, several years before the Arab Spring. What has led to Somalia's failure has been the continued reign of terror by the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab. The actual origins of Al-Shabaab are disputed; some believe it started in 2003 and others believe in 2006¹⁴⁶. Regardless, this organization has been the predominate factor and reason for continued "failure" of Somalia as a mature state. The rise of Al-Shabaab highlights one of the largest issues that has plagued Somalia and the reason for its state failure. Somalia is incredibly fractioned in terms of the social makeup within its borders. The Somali population is divided into four major clans and a number of minority groups. Each of these major clans consists of subclans and extended family networks that join or split in a fluid process of "constant decomposition and recomposition."¹⁴⁷ Like tribal societies elsewhere in the greater Middle East, the clans use deeply ingrained customary law to govern their communities completely independent of modern state structures. Although somewhat weakened in the south from decades of urbanization, violence, and attempts to create a centralized state, these traditional groupings still hold immense influence over society¹⁴⁸. As a result of these factors, Somalia doesn't really fit into any of the factors that have been previously mentioned. Somalia has never had a strong economy, nor military or executive branch because of their socialite problem of the deep fractions of separate individuals.

¹⁴⁶ Ingiriis, Mohamed. The Invention of Al Shabaab in Somalia: Emulating the Anticolonial Dervishes Movement. African Affairs. April 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Ingiriis, Mohamed. *The Invention of Al Shabaab in Somalia*

¹⁴⁸ Ingiriis, Mohamed

The United States and Its Allies Response to Failed States in Africa.

While Syria and Yemen have been more at the forefront of the “failed state” discussion in the past several years, the countries of not just Somalia and Libya but others in Africa have been ongoing since the middle of the 2000s, if not sooner. This area has given the United States military and policymakers difficulty in putting together a proper way to handle the threats these nations have posed. The United States has conduct various types of military engagements but even after these engagements we still find a region of the world that is heavily reliant on receiving supplemental aid packages just to keep the nation running¹⁴⁹. When aid does not work, the military becomes involved.

Libya

Not long after the initial mentioning of failed states in the 2002 NSS the United States began to educate the American people about Qaddafi and how he was just as brutal a dictator as Saddam Hussein. It was mentioned several times in the early 2000s that Libya was a known national security threat to the United States and was also producing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Qaddafi to his credit didn’t run from the allegations; instead he challenged investigators to find WMDs and if there were weapons the United States and the United Nations would like for him to remove, he would do so¹⁵⁰. While still considered part of former President Bush’s “Axis of Evil”, the Bush Administration took little military actions against Qaddafi and instead imposed sanctions. In 2011, with a new president in place and subsequently new national security advisors and policy makers, Qaddafi and his tyrannical powers came back into the forefront¹⁵¹. It was decided that Qaddafi must go and that a free

¹⁴⁹ Chollet, Fisherman and Kuperman. *Who Lost Libya?* Foreign Affairs. May/June 2015.

¹⁵⁰ POWELL, B. (2016). *Who Lost Libya?* Newsweek Global, 167(1), 18–21

¹⁵¹ POWELL, B. (2016). *Who Lost Libya?*

Libyan people would be able to develop a working government with non-corrupt leadership. As a result, on March 17th, 2011 Resolution 1973 was passed by the UN Security Council¹⁵². This resolution authorized military intervention in Libya and was led by the Obama administration. The goal of this resolution was saving the lives of innocent Libyan citizens that were in danger. There was a real fear that the city of Benghazi would be the center stage for a bloody conflict between Qaddafi and Libyan citizens and President Obama would not let that happen. On March 19th of 2011, a no-fly zone was established, and the United States and other NATO countries began bombing Qaddafi and his troops¹⁵³. These bombings would continue for seven more months and remove critical obstacles for Libyan rebels to overthrow Qaddafi.¹⁵⁴ He was killed in his hometown of Sirte on October 20th, 2011.¹⁵⁵ No long after this, the United States declared this was a successful mission and that Libya was free and would shortly be able to stand up a democracy. President Obama even said: “Without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground, we achieved our objectives.” This statement however would prove to be false¹⁵⁶. Since Qaddafi’s death, Libya has been a failure with no ability to form a stable government. To make it even worse, Qaddafi controlled terrorist organizations in Libya from gaining too strong of a foothold; however, in the years since Qaddafi was removed, Libya has become a safe haven for terrorists with some of the strongest groups of Al Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL having a footprint there.¹⁵⁷

152 Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama’s Libya Debacle. *Foreign Affairs*, 94(2), 66–77

153 Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama’s Libya Debacle.

154 Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama’s Libya Debacle.

155 Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama’s Libya Debacle.

156 Kuperman, A. J. (2015). Obama’s Libya Debacle.

¹⁵⁷ OWELL, B. (2016). Who Lost Libya?

The question that needs to be asked here is did the United States of America actually make the situation in Libya worse? This idea may have serious merit, as there were other countries during the Arab Spring movement, like Egypt, where leadership may have been close to being overthrown but was able to scale back the revolt. It warrants serious consideration that United States and NATO, by providing additional support, helped to accelerate the situation in Libya, further weakening Qaddafi and in turn led to his demise. Now, it's important to make a clear distinction that Libya was already a generally accepted failed state, but this is a case where the United States intervening with a failed state actually made a situation worse instead of assisting it.

Somalia

As previously mentioned, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in the Horn of Africa, in December 2002, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was established at Camp Lemonier (Djibouti) with the aim of “preventing violent extremist organizations from threatening America, ensuring the protection of the homeland, American citizens, and American interests”¹⁵⁸ Since the start of this campaign, the United States has conducted various military strikes when necessary against terrorist threats in Somalia. The majority of the support that the United States and its allies delivers to Somalia today is through various financial and logistical support elements. The United States’ overall objective for the relationship with Somalia is to ensure political and economic stability. In order to accomplish this, the United States has provided more than \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance for Somalia since 2006.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Malito, Debora. *Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia*. Third World Quarterly. October, 2015.

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Relations With Somalia. (2018). In Country Fact Sheets: Somalia (p. N.PAG). Superintendent of Documents

This money has been used to address several problems including drought, famine, and refugees.¹⁶⁰ On top of the money that the government has already provided the United States Since 2011, has given another \$253 million to support economic, political, and social sectors.¹⁶¹ The objective of these funds is to achieve political stability, establish a strong economy, obtain access to basic services, and attain representation through legitimate, credible governance. Other countries also provide Somalia with funding when necessary to continue their growth towards a potential stable government.¹⁶² It should be noted however that even with all of this funding, Somalia is still considered a failed state regardless if you look at the previously mentioned models of the FSI. Both of these measurements indicate a failed state, but not one has a direct effect on United States National Security.

As shown in this paper, the way the United States addresses failed states since President Bush began a more formal policy towards addressing them almost twenty years ago varies greatly. At times the United States has helped to support militias in an overarching attempt to remove what is perceived to be a national security threat only to find the nation more threatened once we have removed the threat. Other times we have used the United States strong economic platform to provide financial aid to nations as a way of supporting current leadership to maintain the status quo to prevent new threats. What has been the more popular and successful approach of late has been using the United State military to only execute precise attacks directly targeted at eliminating threats to our nation security. The United States did not go into a full-scale military operation in Syria or Yemen like they have done in the past with Iraq

160 U.S. Relations With Somalia. (2018). In Country Fact Sheets: Somalia (p. N.PAG).

161 U.S. Relations With Somalia. (2018). In Country Fact Sheets: Somalia (p. N.PAG)

162 U.S. Relations With Somalia. (2018). In Country Fact Sheets: Somalia (p. N.PAG)

and Afghanistan knowing that the enemy is hard to precisely define and the risks outweigh the rewards. In Syria's case the United States would also risk having direct confrontation with Russia. What this also shows is that the threats failed states pose to the United States vary and it is only when the United States feels that there is a true threat to our Nation's security would we engage into a military conflict.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This paper has aimed to show how the United States views failed states. Since 2001 the way failed states have been portrayed varies. "Failed states" have become a buzz term, if you

will, since the Arab Spring movement brought numerous countries in the Middle East into a state of turmoil that is still in flux. As we have learned, failed states is too broad a term for the United States government, or its citizens, to use solely as a mechanism that categorizes states that affect national security. Instead, what this paper should prove is three main themes concerning how failed states affect national security: Failed States are hard to identify; the United States needs to find a way to use more modern technologies and analytics to identify failed states; and lastly, that not all failed states have serious effects on National Security.

The first problem when it comes to failed states is the United States and national security scholars have a hard time defining a failed state, a failing state, and a state that has had a few bad years. Although various scholars have tried to identify a failed state, the best way to characterize a failed state is to look back at the second portion of this thesis and use the definition by Thomas Grant: “First, the definition of ‘failed state’ could be manipulated to justify intervention where the real object was not self-defense, but bold imperial gain. Second, intervention, if unfettered by consensus as to the proper scope of the practice, could disrupt international order, as regional and global powers apply inconsistent standards in deciding where and when intervention is appropriate.” We use this definition in the second portion of this paper predominately, but it does summarize a good definition of a failed state, and a good way to describe what Venezuela is today along with more well-known failed states like Libya, Yemen and Syria.

While the first two portions of this thesis dealt with the difficulty of identifying failed states, the last piece of this thesis shows how not all failed states are created equal. United States citizens hear “failed states” and assume a failed state will have a direct impact on the

United States national security. Quite the contrary; instead, it is not just enough to say a “failed state” will affect national security. Instead we must look at which failed states could affect our national security. As this is being written, Venezuela is without question a failed state; both literature and analytical definitions support this claim. But what affect has it had on our nation’s security or even our economy? The answer is very little. Much like what we have learned about Somalia, Venezuela is a nation that has a completely unstable government and military. The United States has provided some financial aid like they have in Somalia, but since there are no real terrorist threats in Venezuela there is no need to have the type of minor military oversight that we have seen in certain parts of the world - - as in Yemen. Even in cases like Yemen and Syria where you see clear terrorist threats that could affect our nation’s security, the United States has found the proper balance of using military operations when necessary; operations that do not put large numbers of our military into arms way, but prevents a terrorist attack against both the United States and our allies.

While there are several failed states in this world right now that do not affect our national security, there are still nations in this world that, if they were to fail, the United States would need to take drastic measure to prevent that state from failing. In this context and as this paper has shown, Saudi Arabia is a country that the United States cannot allow to fail. Saudi Arabia presents a unique challenge to the failed state model and the United States national security platform. If this country were to fail the United Sates economy would take a major hit as was seen in the middle of March 2020 when Saudi Arabia and Russia got into a price war over the price of oil and the United States stock market took a serious hit for several days. Now this is also during the COVID-19 pandemic so other factors are at play as well. More than just

the economic impact of a Saudi Arabia failure would be if Saudi Arabia were to fail, the United States would lose a key ally in the Middle East where we already have very few. Additionally, a failed Saudi Arabia would enable Iran and Yemen, its two closest neighboring countries, more power. This would completely disrupt the balance of threats for the United States and its allies in the Middle East. If Yemen and Iran were to gain more power from a Saudi Arabia failed state, Israel would be even more at risk from an attack by Iran or Yemen given their newfound strength. This is an example of a potential failed state where the United States would absolutely have to use the full force of the United States military and Intelligence Community to prevent this from happening. You would likely see a type of intervention that was seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. This type of failed state is the type that the American public should be concerned about.

Additional Items that Could be Researched:

The majority of this paper focused on areas of the world that have been in a constant state of failure or in Saudi Arabia's case an extremely wealthy country in the Middle East. Most of what has been researched here and by scholars has been failed states and the Middle East and Africa. What would be an interesting set of countries to examine would be a set of nations along Eastern Europe. Given what Russia has continuously done through acts of provocation over the past decade, it should be studied if a country like Poland or Turkey were to fail and what affect that would have on national security. This would shift two types of failed state paradigms. The first would be a country not located in the Middle East given the amount of study done to failed states in this area. Additionally, you would have a superpower in Russia overtaking a NATO country and the downstream effects of this could result in starting a very

similar serious conflict that would be seen if Saudi Arabia were to fall and be overtaken by Iran and Yemen.

Failed states are indeed hard to define and mostly cannot be identified until after a state has already failed. Given that failed states could potentially harm the United States and the security of the United States allies, new methods must be used. These methods must include a new way to identify potential failed states. It's important to help understand where states can fail ahead of time to understand the risk of that state failing and what can be done ahead of time to prevent failure if need be. Understanding where states can potentially fail is important because not every failed state is equal. There are failed states throughout the world that have been failed states for decades, and will be for decades to come. But, the ones that affect United States national security directly are the ones we need to better understand and find ahead of time to shift the paradigm to identify those that have little to no effect on our national security.

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